

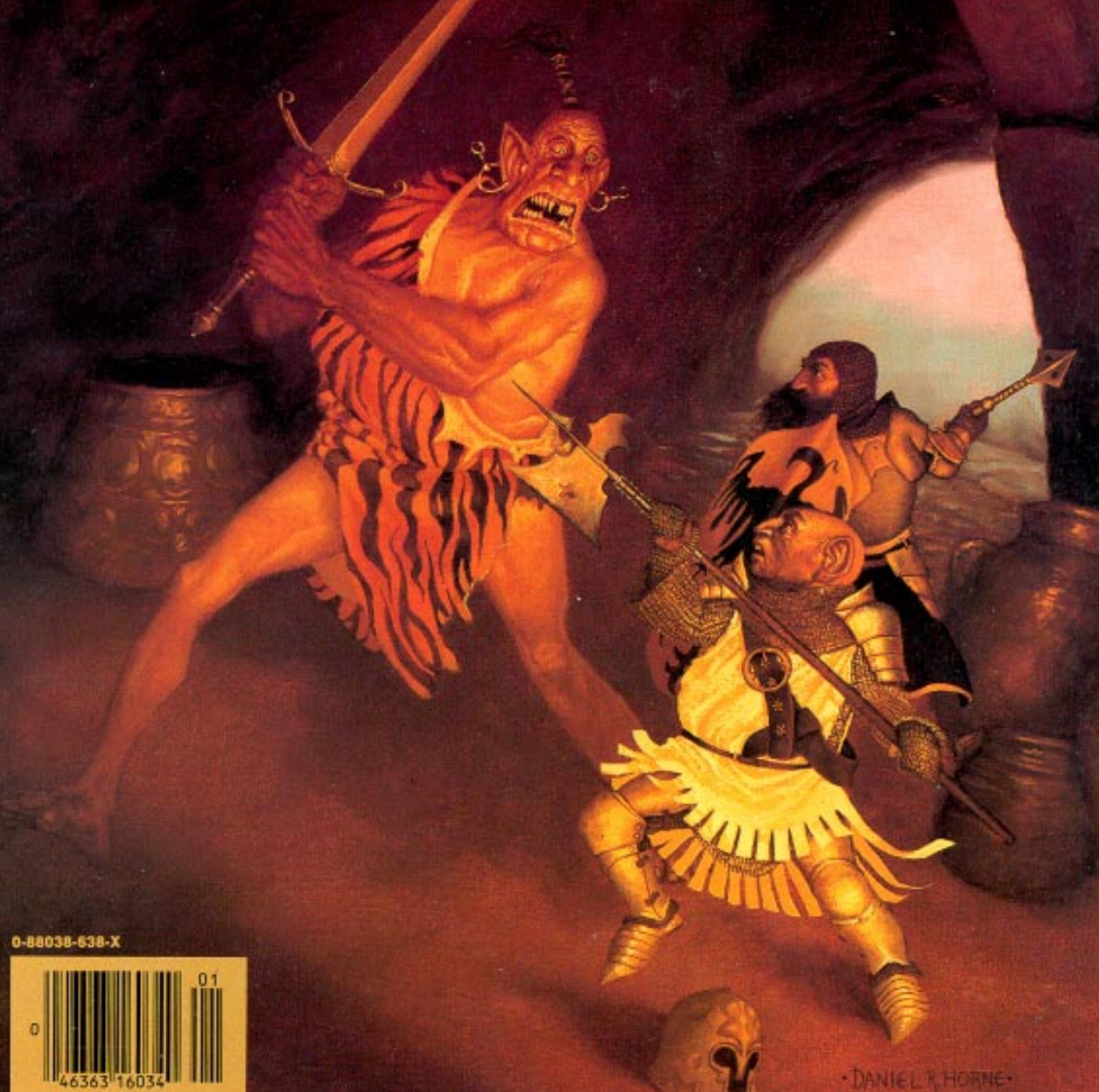
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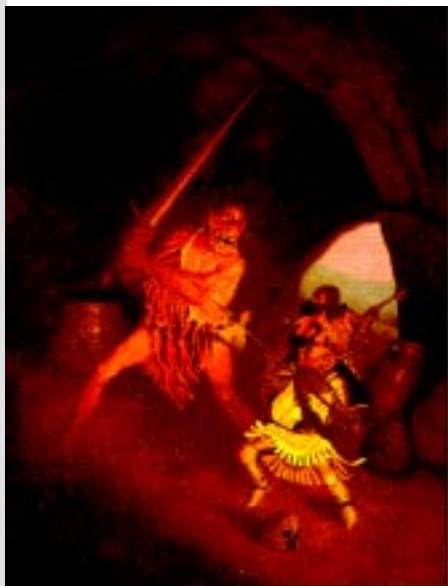
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## CONTENTS

### SPECIAL ATTRACTION

#### 15 Not Human Enough:

Humanoids have very simple tastes (and they like the taste of adventurers best).

#### 16 The Dragon's Bestiary — The Readers

Want some excitement? Let the PCs meet a swamp-orc assassin tribe.

#### 22 Orcs Throw Spells, Too! — Randal S. Doering

Shamans and witch doctors must earn their magic — but the price is steep.

#### 34 Boulder-Throwers and Humanoid Hordes — Arthur Collins

The bigger they are, the more you should worry.

#### 38 Hey, Wanna Be a Kobold? — Joseph Clay

In just seven minutes, we can make you a humanoid.

### OTHER FEATURES

#### 44 The Ulfjarl's Stone — fiction by Mickey Zucker Reichert

Was he sent out to die or to live?

#### 50 Role-playing Reviews — Jim Bambra

The state of the galactic gaming art: GDW's MEGATRAVELLER™ and SJG's GURPS® Space games.

#### 64 The Role of Books — John C. Bunnell

Sorcerers from England, China, and the lands beyond.

#### 68 The Game Wizards — Mary Kirchoff

It's trilogy time! New book releases from TSR, Inc.

#### 72 The Role of Computers — Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

Start the New Year on the right disk (or VCR tape).

#### 80 Through the Looking Glass — Karen S. Garvin

Brown is a fine color for a horse, but not all the time!

#### 88 The Marvel®-Phile — David Edward Martin

A mad scientist and a benevolent sorcerer — on the same super-team.

### DEPARTMENTS

3 Letters

6 Forum

14 Sage Advice

62 TSR Previews

84 Gamers Guide

86 Index to Advertisers

92 Convention Calendar

98 SnarfQuest

102 Dragonmirth

### COVER

Daniel Horne calls his cover painting "Strength in Numbers," pointing out that the best thing you can have when you face a big problem is a friend who will help you solve it. Here, two gnome guards have discovered a gullan in their cavern treasury — and there's only one solution to *that* problem.



# LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

## Holo-Dragon

Dear Dragon:

Have you seen *National Geographic's* December 1988 issue? The cover is a hologram. It would be interesting to see a DRAGON Magazine issue with a hologram on its cover. This is an ideal for a special issue — e.g., 150th issue or 13th anniversary issue. Even if this might raise the price of the magazine for that issue, I'm sure faithful readers wouldn't mind the price. I'm even sure that that issue would sell like hotcakes! I don't know if you'd be able to do this, but it would be great if you could.

Emanuel Matos  
St. Bruno, Quebec

*This idea has been suggested before (thanks to several National Geographic covers), but the National Geographic Society has a far bigger budget than we have. We haven't checked on the exact cost, but a phone call to the National Geographic Society revealed that the technical problems the magazine's staff faced in producing their two hologram covers were enormous, as was the cost (and we're talking about a magazine with 2.8 million readers). Oh, well!*

## Where's Krynn?

Dear Dragon:

I have noticed that there have been no articles on Krynn for a good period of time (over a year). I have tried to do my part as a writer to help remedy this situation. I am sure others who love the world of Krynn and adventuring in it would also love to see more. Will there be more on Krynn in the future? If so, I hope it is in the very near future. Krynn has plenty of room to grow; will you help it by publishing more about it?

Jeff Maxwell  
Troy MI

*We have received very little material on DRAGONLANCE® campaigns and only marginally more material on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting. Though these settings are widely played, few have written to us about them. It would be easiest to tailor a group of characters, magical items, monsters, or new spells to fit one of these settings for our "Lords & Legends," "Bazaar of the Bizarre," "The Dragon's Bestiary," and "Arcane Lore" columns. Perhaps some of our readers would like to try this (nudge, nudge).*

## Value of EPT

Dear Dragon:

I am inquiring about the value of the EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE role-playing game (copyrighted 1975 by TSR, Inc.). I received it recently from my aunt, who paid a mere dollar for it! My cousin and I both believe it may be a collector's item. It contains all of its original contents, in mint condition, minus the dice.

Kevin Collins  
Dearborn Heights MI

*At the 1983 and 1984 GEN CON® Game Fairs, copies of this game in good condition sold for about \$15-16. The price has probably increased since then, but (as noted in the response to the letter "Golden oldies" in issue #135) the price you'll get depends on the buyer. Keep your game in good shape and see what people want for it in game auctions, if you want to sell it. For more information on the EPT game, see "Role-playing reviews" in issue #128.*

## Setting records

Dear Dragon:

My gaming group has been playing AD&D® games for about a year now. We are interested in trying to break the world record for continuous playing of the AD&D game [and] I am writing to you for the marathon rules. We would be much obliged if you could send us the rules and the current record. The most up-to-date record we have is 84 hours.

Mark Way  
No address given

*This is one of the most frequently asked questions we get at TSR, but we are the wrong people to ask. The offices of the Guinness Book of World Records should be able to help you with this, since they publish the records. However, we do not really recommend this activity since of course it means prolonged periods of sleep loss.*

## Computer glitch

Dear Dragon:

What happened to one of my favorite sections, "The Role of Computers"? I noticed in DRAGON issue #139 that instead of "The Role of Computers" you had "The Role of Books." I would like "The Role of Computers" returned. Thank you.

Ted Leng  
North Caldwell NJ

*"The Role of Computers" and "Role-playing Reviews" were bumped from issue #139 at the last moment due to a number of problems. Barring unforeseen events, these columns will continue to appear in the magazine on a regular basis — or at least as regular as we can manage.*

This is the first editorial I've written since my mononucleosis passed (sort of) in late November. In my addled state, no coherent theme suggests itself to start the new year, so we will make do with

## Random notes

**We're International!** This issue of DRAGON® Magazine ends the series of U.S. and U.K. editions that were printed throughout 1988. Whatever you now see in the magazine is the same material that appears everywhere, with the exception of some cover changes. DRAGON Magazine has had an international flavor for many years (see the editorial for issue #135). Wherever you happen to be, you will get the best of what we have.

**We've moved!** Or rather, the TSR Limited (formerly TSR UK Limited) offices have moved. Our readers in the United Kingdom and Europe should note the new address: TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, England. The TSR Ltd. offices offer subscriptions to DRAGON Magazine, too; see the subscription information at the bottom of the first "Forum" page.

The mailing address for the editorial offices of DRAGON Magazine has changed, too. Our address is now: DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

**No error:** This is the January 1989 issue, but the copyright dates herein are correct. This issue was printed in late December 1988, so the copyrights are for 1988. We'll change to 1989 dates in February. I mention this only to stop the flood of "Ha, ha, you screwed up!" letters we get.

**Changelings:** In the last six months, we've had a number of staff changes (as evidenced by the masthead-box changes on page 2 of each issue). Some readers have wondered what was going on. Briefly: Two of our people gained new additions to their families and have left TSR for the more demanding roles of parents (one is a free-lance writer whose material still appears here); one left and joined the staff of a magazine in California; three left TSR to pursue free-lance work as writers and/or editors; one got married and changed her name (but still works here); and we've rearranged the job positions of the rest (after

*Continued on page 43*





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# FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

I rarely read "Forum," but the debate on illusionists and illusionist spells has brought me to write about my feelings on the subject. Illusionists are my second-favorite character, and I have had lots of experience on the giving and receiving ends of illusions. The way that I have dealt with them is very similar to the way that I have played the AD&D® game all this time; I use common sense regarding the logical power progression of the illusion spells. Each time an illusionist gains a new spell level, he has the potential of affecting a new sensory system of a victim, but the illusionist is in no way a master of this ability.

Let us first consider the phantasmal *force* spell. It affects only sight and therefore is only good for illusions of mundane, inanimate objects (i.e., traps and barriers). A creature would make no sound when attacking (grunts, weapon contacting armor, etc.), and any magical attack such as *fireball* or lightning bolt wouldn't have the thermal component to make it believable. As to the limits of what the illusionist can make, that is all determined by the area of effect. An illusion adds; it doesn't take away. A person can be impaled by illusory spikes but will not fall down a pit so made. As in all illusion spells, have the caster describe exactly every detail of his illusion. The complexity of the illusion plays a

factor in the damage (if it is offensive) and believability of the illusion.

Next, there is improved phantasmal *force*, which adds the next sensory component: sound. Note that these are simple sounds; the illusionist is not a master as soon as he gets this ability. This spell should allow for simple creatures or very believable traps. (You can hear the trap mechanism working and also hear it as it grinds its way into the victim's armor.) The monsters created only have spells and abilities that produce sight and sound; there is no thermal component to make a *fireball* or a fire-breathing dragon. Once again, the power of the creature depends on the area of effect and how the caster describes his creation. It is wise to think before getting overly zealous. Anyone downwind of a dragon or an army of orcs will be very suspicious if he cannot smell them.

Last in the line of pure illusions is *spectral force*, which adds the olfactory and thermal components (and, since taste depends on smell, taste can be added as well). This is very useful for creating complex monsters since they can be smelled (but that is a characteristic that the illusionist must be very familiar with), and the monsters can have abilities that involve heat or cold. Once again, an illusionist who just acquired this spell is not a master of these senses; he cannot make many different smells (one or two at the most) or make fire hotter than that of an average campfire. The ability to make an illusion as all powerful as a *fireball* or cone of cold does not come until the sixth-level spell *shadow magic*, and then it is only a one-shot deal from the illusionist himself, not from the endless reserves of some illusory magic-user.

Now, I'm not saying what an illusionist can create with his spells — only what he can make believable. A 9th-level fighter with an intelligence of 5 will probably believe a fire-breathing dragon is there with only the use of a *spectral forces* spell. This brings up the next topic:

disbelieving and saving throws.

I rule that intelligence is always checked when dealing with illusions, no matter how powerful or experienced the person is. Experience only matters in how quickly the victim can disbelieve and get his saving throw (with maybe a little bonus or two). Will [allowing a saving throw] require a small error or a major faux pas [on the part of the illusionist]? Characters have to consciously disbelieve in an illusion before they get their saves, and monsters are no different. An ordinary group of orc soldiers does not attempt to disbelieve every spell cast at it; just when the group is allowed a save is left up to the DM's discretion (sprinkled with a little common sense).

However, there are certain oversights for which I always give saving throws. First of all, illusions don't last long against missile-firing armies. A sword will be held back by a believing mind if the weapon "hits" an illusory barrier (though the sword-wielder would be suspicious if no sound occurred on contact), but an arrow doesn't have to disbelieve as it passes through an illusion. Also, a huge monster appearing from nowhere or in an illogical manner (for example, a red dragon appearing in the Arctic) will immediately give just about everyone a saving throw against it. For this reason, my illusionists always carry around balls of clay; they mold them into the monsters they want, then make the clay monsters look like they grow into the real things. Opponents believe the illusionists are powerful magic-users or have magical statues. Once people find out that such a spell-caster is an illusionist, however, they always get an automatic saving throw against his spells.

The caster also needs to concentrate on his illusion at all times. Except in the case of shadow *monsters* and the like, the monster will not react to a blow unless the illusionist concentrates and makes it do so. An illusion should cover its victims as well. An illusory wound incurred by an enemy is not quite believable if illusory blood and guts do not accompany it. As soon as an illusion is set on autopilot, it loses quite a lot of its power. Yet another reason for using missile weapons against an illusionist: They ruin his concentration.

Finally, what sort of illusions should be useful to the party? As the other PCs know of the

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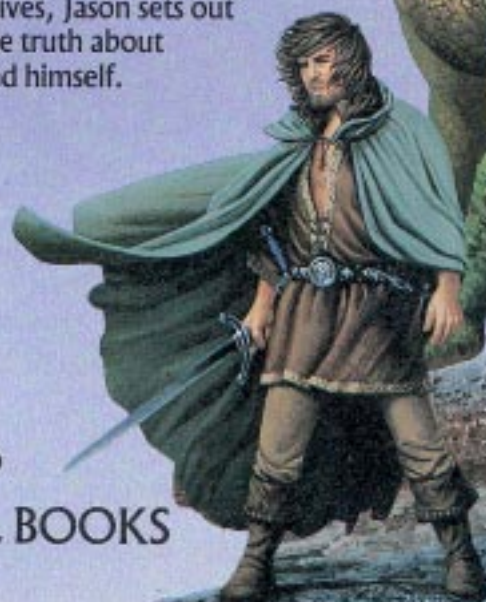


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illusionist and his spells, he cannot do anything extravagant unless it is at least partially real or he manages to come up with some logical explanation otherwise. The PCs still get a large bonus to their saving throws, either way. Therefore, the illusionist is stuck with performing simple coverups, like changing the smell or sight of, food to make it more savory. An illusory cleric created to heal the party is out of the question; he would only be able to heal psychological damage if he was believed (e.g., *fear*, damage from an illusion or psionics, etc.). Most of the pure illusions are very one-sided; that's why the rest of the spells on the list are utilitarian.

These guidelines are almost as vague as the ones given in the rules, but that is the way the game was meant to be. If we shoot for too many set rules and tables, we may find ourselves spending hours over a combat situation that could easily take a few minutes.

Walker White  
Oak Ridge TN

Being a player of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game, I find the use of martial arts in fighting extremely useful, but I do not think you can limit it to *five* categories. Therefore, I expanded the categories in my role-playing adventures. Here are some that I use:

1. Martial arts F — This martial art is designed to cause damage by hitting pressure points. It gives a +1CS when dealing with damage in a slugfest.

2. Martial arts G — This form of martial arts is designed to lessen damage inflicted in combat by dodging and blocking. It is a purely defensive martial art. It gives the user a +1CS when dodging and lessens damage by -1CS in hand-to-hand combat.

3. Martial arts H — This martial art is designed to focus the user's internal energy by concentrating one round. The character can release the energy in a sudden burst, giving him one extra attack without a penalty.

4. Martial arts I — This martial art isn't really a martial art but more of a discipline. It is used to recover lost health and to avoid stuns by raising endurance +1CS.

Applying martial arts in combat can sometimes make a difference in a fight. I am hoping that these martial arts can make a character more formidable in hand-to-hand combat.

Brad Shimizo  
Fremont CA

I have noticed in many particular issues of DRAGON® Magazine that articles, though limited by subject, do not take account of each other. Issue #133 is an example of this. The articles on perception and surprise are related, but there is no consideration of the effect of a perception statistic on surprise values.

A perception characteristic would be yet another in a long line of such. I feel a new characteristic would upset the apple cart, simply because of its ramifications; after all, the perception article as it stands gives bonuses to certain skills for particular classes (e.g., thief, monk, ninja, etc.). A less harmful manner of introducing perception would be to consider it as a function of class and race, in terms of the abilities to surprise and be surprised (which after all is perception at work) and the ability to notice something unusual and put the observer on guard.

Therefore, we already know how perceptive any particular being or character is. The "Surprise!" article provides a useful translation of awkward die rolls into percentiles, and it allows specific difficulty factors for many situations.

I suggest the perception skill merely be a column on the "Surprises on a" line in Table 1. Thus, Beln the ranger surprises 3 in 6 times. Beln meets Pigsy, a fighter who is surprised [and surprises] 2 in 6 times. On the table, Pigsy would be surprised 50% of the time. If Pigsy were following Beln through the streets, Beln should have a  $[100\% - 17\% = 83\%]$  chance of noticing him. If Balin the svirfneblin (mentioned in the article) did the trailing, Beln should only have a 74% chance of detecting him.

For hidden objects, whether natural or otherwise, the same sort of test applies. Who hid the object? Penalties may be applied if a skilled craftsman hides something. Any half-decent DM should be able to assign a level of difficulty when something is naturally hidden or dropped. The chance of finding something will then vary with the ability of the searchers, and the chance will not be an unreasonable value applying for all.

It may also be reasonable to consider the difference between noticing something and actively searching for it. Perhaps a deduction of a base 17% value should be made for someone who "just happens to notice" something.

There are, however, anomalies in the rules, such as the secret-door location chance for elves and half-elves, the underground abilities of dwarves and gnomes, etc. These could be attributed to racial inheritance or to upbringing which aids their normal perceptiveness in certain circumstances. These are nevertheless awkward to explain rationally.

As to the informal survey on the future of role-playing announced in issue #133's editorial, my opinion is that role-playing will split more between hack-n-slay games and role-playing games as new games appear. Only a few new games will remain as easily variable as the AD&D game is.

Mark Hunter  
Torworth, Notts, U.K.

I'm writing to you on three related subjects covered in issue #135 in "Forum." These subjects are low-level spell-casters, illusionist spells, and spell books.

I find that a 1st-level magic-user needs no improvement to survive. He has all the resources needed to survive as is, if only you look for them. These resources are his intelligence and his starting money.

According to the *Players Handbook*, a magic-user starts the game with 20-80 gp and can equip himself for 10 gp. The extra money can be well used in several survival strategies, as follow:

1. Join a group of adventurers. There is safety in numbers, and this is how the game is supposed to be played.

2. Loan money to a fighter for armor. This helps him survive, and he'll owe you a favor and some money.

3. Hire a bodyguard. This is costly, but it guarantees he'll place your life before almost everything else. You might be able to get one on the promise of a magical item for him or by use of a *charm* spell.

4. Buy a bodyguard. If there's slavery in your campaign, it is easy. Otherwise, you can buy a guard dog for 25 gp or a hunting dog for 17 gp. You might also be able to pick up something more exotic, like a nilbog or a rust monster.

5. Make a bodyguard or helper. This option is not usually open to low-level spell-casters, but if you can get a golem or undead to serve you, you're doing great. Cantrips and 1st-level spells usable for this are *bee*, *bug*, *gnats*, *mouse*, *spider*, *enlarge*, *find familiar*, *mount*, *unseen servant*, and *Tenser's floating disc*.

6. Sell your services in town. Remember, 1 gp = 1 xp. All you need is the imagination to apply every spell in the book.

I must now defend my position on the construction of traveling and permanent spell books (issue #129). I based my description on the size, volume, and weight figures on the writing of Eric Krein in issue #123 and the assumption that a traveling spell book would be built "form follows function" while a permanent spell book would be "function follows form." I will grant that I didn't consult *Unearthed Arcana*.

Mr. Krein, in turn, seems to have missed a key note in my description of a traveling spell book — the pages are *thin*! They are made to be squeezed into a small space, not to endure attacks. Permanent (or standard) spell books are constructed to serve the same function for a magic-user as treasure serves a dragon: status symbols! The better quality of these works would give them a +2 bonus to saving throws.

This example of spell book construction should help: A wizard orders one traveling and one standard spell book. He is informed that the standard book will be ready in a year, and the traveling book in a month.

The traveling book is built as a loose-leaf volume. The pages are between one-half and one-tenth the thickness of a hair. The cover consists of two iron pans filled with alkaloids and capped with ceramic tiles. The book comes with an airtight glass case to keep it, and, maybe, a few spell components inside. It's built for volume, not strength.

The standard spell book is built as a hard-bound work. Each page is 2-5 hairs thick and stored in preservatives until needed. The pages are sewn to the cover with elf hairs and glued in place. Endpapers are used. The cover is constructed of hardwood and covered with rare leathers. The book is decorated with gold leaf and jewels, and is built to last 1,000 times the 1-2 years of the traveling book.

My final topic concerns the vagueness of illusionist spells. I say they have to be vague; an illusionist has to be able to create everything from a butterfly to Tiamat to a ball to a gaping crater full of demons with a given spell. His spells have to be powerful and flexible. This means they are complex to the point that nobody can conceive of an eight-level illusionist spell. The spells do this as they stand.

Douglas M. Burck  
Cincinnati OH

I'd like to reply to Kenneth Arromdee's reply to my letter [issue #135]. If you have ever played or run a magic-user who has set up his own magic shop, one of the first things you discover is that scrolls are the primary source of income available to you. There are a couple of cases where the cost of making a single application's worth of ink for a scroll exceed the sale price listed for that scroll, but for the most part, scrolls are a high-profit, easily produced item with a price range within reach of people who can't afford the cost of magical items. More to the point, they can be made at low levels. Scrolls are the *only* thing an 8th-level magic-user can make and sell.

Mr. Arromdee doesn't like the loophole I pointed out about the spell *phantom armor* and states how he'd make a ruling against it in his campaign. But just for the record, all this ruling does is rob the players of the chance to role-play (that magic-user has no rings, cloaks, or bracers; how did that ogre miss?). And while reversing the robe so the armor doesn't show protects its wearer from having the armor dispelled by disbelief, when was the last time anyone ever



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used disbelief to get rid of a *phantom armor* spell? That ruling is the equivalent of making an insurance policy against being run over by a 1913 Rolls Royce while within the Grand Canyon illegal.

The point he made about PCs needing DM collusion in order to mistakenly sell a higher-level version of an *armor* or *magic missile* spell is nonsense. I didn't post any odds for it in my letter because there were too many variables involved. Obviously the odds of it happening are small, but impossible? Look at the chance the game gives for characters to make a successful "god call." Consider a magic shop run by an absent-minded buffoon like the alchemist Amelior from DQ1 *The Shattered Statue*. In such a case, the PCs actually have a fair chance of lucking out. They might do slightly worse if the store is being run by a new apprentice. The odds are that the PCs will only get the regular scroll, but the chances of getting lucky are realistically within the range of the dice we roll. If tossing the dice to see if a party gets an unlikely break is DM collusion, I am a card-carrying collusionist!

His last paragraph had nothing to do with my letter but deserves a little comment. Using the dual-classed character option to help a magic-user survive is an admission that the single-classed magic-user is not weak at low level — it's hopeless! The problem is that a lot of characters do not have the minimum 15 strength and 17 intelligence needed to qualify for the fighter/magic-user dual class. What do you do with this set of rolls: S 5, I 17, D 13, W 11, CN 16, Ch 10, CM 12 — declare the character hopeless?

Even if the character does qualify, there is a problem. Look at the minimum starting age for

a fighter (16) and for a magic-user (26); see the DMG, page 13. Do you get the idea that there is a long length of preparation to learning how to cast spells? How long should a character who is changing classes leave the campaign, and how far does the rest of the party advance while he is gone?

Even if you are generous and let Joe Fighter spend a couple of weeks at Magic Camp and come back as a 1st-level magic-user, he is at least one level behind the rest and starting anew in one of the slowest advancing classes. (Incidentally, most players who go this route go up to 3rd level as a fighter to get the benefits of better saving throws, a better "to hit" chance, and extra hit points for a relatively small experience-point cost.)

No, the dual-class option is not the solution, unless the player has a lot of DM collusion.

Larry Madden  
Glendale CA

Donald Miller's article in issue #127, "Two Hands are Better Than One" was very interesting, but I feel I must disagree with his treatment of the subject on some points.

First, [I disagree with] his maximum weapon lengths and weights for humans. He has the maximum weapon length for a secondary weapon as 2', when the wakizashi (which [in *Oriental Adventures*] is commonly used in the secondary hand) has length of 2-3' (presumably averaging at about 2'6"). For the length of primary and one-handed weapons, he uses the user's height (presumably 6' for the average human) times two-thirds, then comes up in his table with the figure 3'9"; however, the bastard sword (which can be used one-handed) has length of 4'6". He

gives 15 lbs. as the maximum weight for a pole arm, when the halberd weighs 17.5 lbs.

I propose the adjustments in Table 1 as allowable weapon lengths and weights, for an average

**Table 1**  
**Maximum Weapon Values**

| Weapon     | Maximum length | Maximum weight |
|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Secondary  | 2'6"           | 5 lbs.         |
| Primary    | 4'6"           | 7.5 lbs.       |
| One-handed | 4'6"           | 10 lbs.        |
| Two-handed | 6'             | 25 lbs.        |
| Pole arms  | 12'            | 17.5 lbs.      |

human of 10 strength and 6' height.

Donald Miller then goes on to calculate the weapon lengths, weights, and weapons allowable for characters of the demi-human races, of average height and strength. But characters, particularly player characters, are seldom average. It would therefore be more reasonable instead to state the maximum weapon lengths and weights as functions of height and strength. For simplicity of derivation and calculation, I assume that weapon lengths and weights allowable are linear functions of height and strength (see Table 2). This will allow maximum weapon lengths and weights to be calculated for individual characters, and will mean that a character with wimpy strength will not be able to use a two-handed sword simply because he is a human.

Donald Miller rounds his length limits to the nearest inch; I would recommend rounding them up to the next half foot (and next 5 gp for weights), as all weapon lengths (except for the dagger) are given in half feet (and weights in 5 gp) increments and to allow for the fact that the lengths and weights given are averages, and we wish to give upper limits (if someone finds that an average-size weapon is slightly too long, he will simply get a slightly shorter one).

This system seems to work for low and medium strengths but may need adjustment for very high strength (as it stands, you need a 25 strength to wield a two-handed sword with one hand, given that you are tall enough to do so). A possible adjustment would be to give double the increment of allowed weight for each strength point beyond 15 and an increment for each category of exceptional strength (i.e., 01-50, 51-75, etc.). This would then allow someone who is 8' tall and has 18/91 strength to use a two-handed sword one-handed.

I would also like to suggest the following adjustments for individual weapons:

**Short sword:** This is stated in the *Players Handbook*, page 38, to be 2' long, but is noted on page 37 as being 15-24" long, I suggest that a character with sufficient strength to use it and more than the minimum height required to use a dagger (length 15") be allowed to use one.

**Battle axe:** This weapon seems unusually long, being nearly three times as long as a hand axe and longer than the long sword. A more reasonable average length might be 3'.

**Hand axe:** Currently, this has the same weight, length, and average damage as a hammer, so why did anybody bother putting an axe blade on it? A better weight might be 40 gp.

I also suggest that allowable speed factors be based on a character's dexterity rather than being a fixed value. A character should not be able to use in his primary hand any weapon with a speed factor greater than half his dexterity, or any weapon in his secondary hand that



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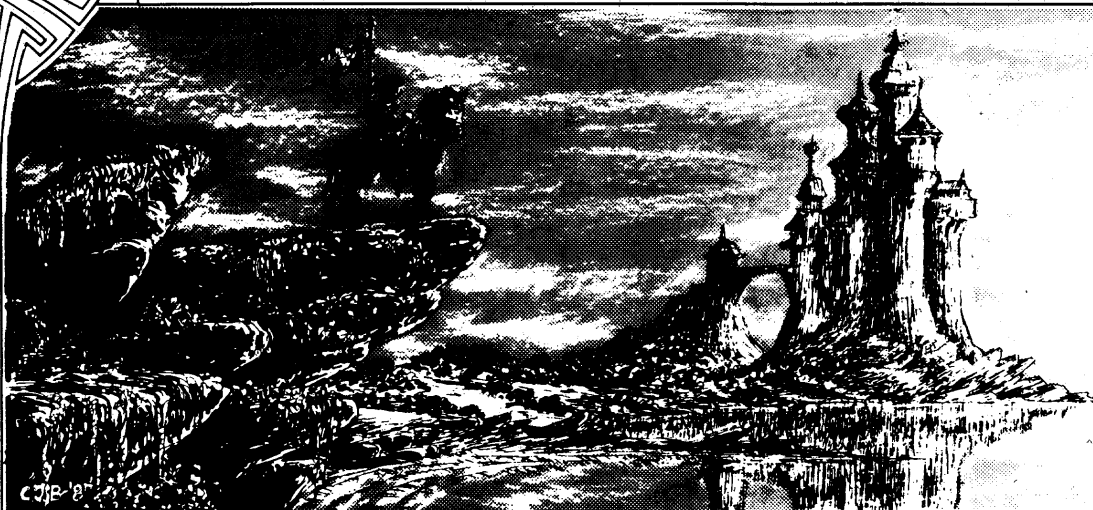
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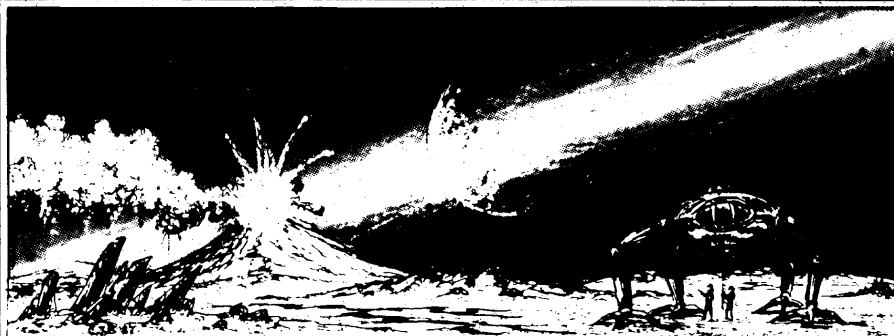
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# SHATTERED WORLD

**Table 2**  
**Weapon Sizes Per Height and Strength of User**

|                         | Pole arm | Two-handed | One-handed | Primary | Secondary |
|-------------------------|----------|------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Length-height ratio*    | 2.0      | 1.0        | 0.75       | 0.75    | 0.40      |
| Weight-strength ratio** | 1.75     | 2.5        | 1.0        | .75     | .5        |

\* Number shows length in feet of weapon, per foot of the user's height.

\*\* Number shows weight in pounds of weapon, per pound of the user's weight.

every so often (simulated by removing the character from play), and that they take time each day, before breakfast or before they go to sleep, to pray. These things are assumed. We do not role-play them. ("Well, my cleric, finds some rocks to build an altar, then he builds it.")

If modern values do show up in our game, it should be because of the beliefs of the players, but these morals and values should not be imposed by the DM.

Aaron Goldblatt  
Fort Worth TX

I'm currently Dungeon Master for an AD&D game. I've been keeping up with the arguments about magic-users wearing armor and using weapons, and with arguments in mind, I sought some information that would support either of the arguments. I found this quote in

*DRAGONLANCE® Legends*, volume 2, page 111:

"At the beginning of time, magic-users were prohibited by the gods from carrying any type of weapon or wearing any sort of armor. The reason being, ostensibly, that they needed to devote time to study that could not be spent achieving proficiency in the art of weaponry. But, after the magic-users helped Huma defeat the Queen of Darkness by creating the magical dragon orbs, the gods granted them the right to carry daggers upon their persons. . . ." I allow magic-users to use daggers (and use oil) as weapons.

Now let's talk about fighters. I have found that the fighter is considered undesirable for a few reasons. First, fighters have no special abilities outside of combat; second, if a player wants a character that wears good armor, can take and dish out decent damage, and has nice hit points, then he could choose a cleric and get turning and spell abilities to boot! So, I feel since a fighter is trained in combat, he would also be able to treat minor wounds. Using this rule, a fighter could heal 1 hp of damage each day in semisterile conditions (meaning anywhere decently clean).

Darrell Anderson  
Elma NY

I am writing this letter in response to Tim Merrett's comments in issue #136. Although I have no problem with his idea of requiring the use of a weapon proficiency slot for shield use, his comments on weapon specialization show that he did not fully understand weapon specialization.

He stated that a ranger could become "specialized in a bow, double specialized in a sword and an axe, and finally specialized with a dagger." According to *Unearthed Arcana* (page 18), the decision to specialize "must be made when the character is initially created" — in other words, the only time a character can choose to specialize is at first level. Furthermore, careful reading of the text also reveals the following text, "This discipline is manifested in the character's choice of one weapon to practice and use, to the exclusion of others." A character can never specialize in more than one weapon.

Allowing fighters the use of weapon specialization gives them a great advantage. To allow fighters to specialize in more than one weapon would greatly unbalance the game.

Jimmy B. Ellis  
Victoria TX

**Table 3**  
**Weapon Sizes: Ambidexterity Proficiency**

|                               | Total of two weapons | Maximum individual weapon |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Length-height ratio*          | 1.15                 | 0.75                      |
| Weight-strength ratio**       | 1.25                 | .75                       |
| Speed factors/dexterity point | 0.83                 | 0.5                       |

\* Number shows length in feet of weapon, per foot of the user's height.

\*\* Number shows weight in pounds of weapon, per pound of the user's weight.

has a factor of greater than one-third of his dexterity.

In "Be a Two-Fisted Fighter" (DRAGON issue #68), Roger Moore wrote that ambidexterity could simply be considered a matter of having very high dexterity. This is not true; I myself am nearly completely ambidexterous but am not particularly dexterous. Ambidexterity is having both hands being equal or interchangeable and is, as far as I can see, partly a matter of natural tendencies, but mostly a matter of tuition. I would therefore suggest the following:


**Ambidexterity Non-Weapon Proficiency:** This proficiency allows a character to attack with both hands equally when using two weapons (both being at - 3 to hit, plus the Reaction/Attacking Adjustment). It also lets the character use larger weapons in his secondary hand at the expense of using a smaller one in his primary. That is, weapons can be used in any combination, as long as the totals of the lengths, the weights, and the speed factors of the two weapons are not greater than those of the totals of primary and secondary weapons allowable, and both weapons are permissible as primary weapons (see Table 3).

In addition, a character with ambidexterity may use either hand "one-handed" without penalty.

Timothy Makinson  
Dunedin, New Zealand

I realize it's a bit late, but after reading the "Forum" letter by Matthew Hamilton in issue #121, I feel compelled to respond. The very idea of a Christian campaign is, to me, blasphemous. I don't think that any real religion, modern or not, should be allowed in an AD&D game. I am a Jewish person who is not offended by much, but this gets me mad. Even though the AD&D game is roughly based on the Middle Ages, to say that the game must have a set of modern moral values is outrageous. In my game, the parents of my players do not think poorly of our game simply because I do not play with "gods." I have simply removed that element from the game.

I do make assumptions, however. Clerics and paladins are assumed to have a place of worship to which they donate regularly (simulated by removing money and items from the characters' possessions), that they take time out to serve




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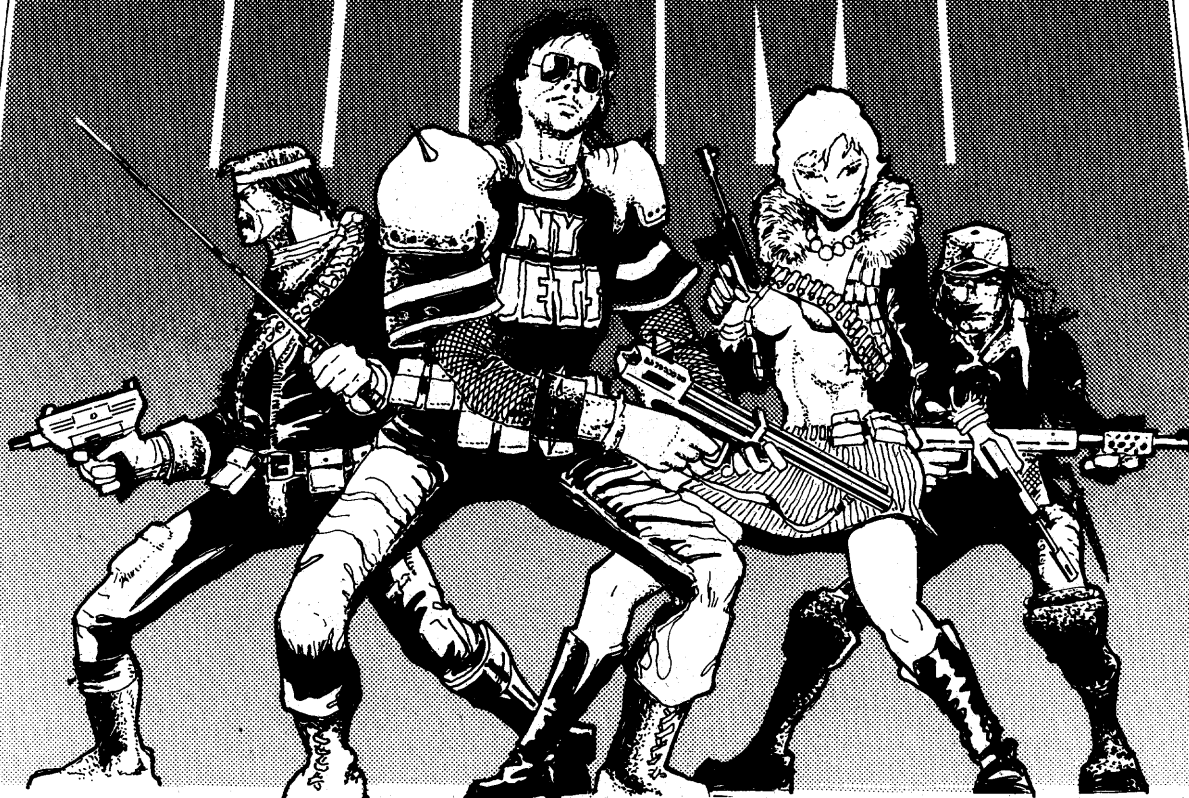


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# SAGE ADVICE

## by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

This month, the sage visits the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® fantasy setting for a working vacation. These questions are not related to the *GREYHAWK® Adventures* tome, but many concern the older WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting boxed set.

### Where in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting are the Clashing Rocks and other special locations listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*?

The landmarks and objects mentioned on page 164 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* have no fixed locations; they are intended only as examples.

### Which areas of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting are the most suitable for adventuring? I want to start a campaign using the most mysterious and intriguing areas.

I won't make a value judgment about which areas of the Flanaess are the "most mysterious and intriguing." Read the descriptions and decide for yourself; that is what DMs are supposed to do. The individual area descriptions and the random-encounter charts will tell you what sort of creatures live in each area. When searching for the mysterious and intriguing, don't overlook your own options as a campaign designer. The WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting is a play-aid; you are free to develop it as you wish. Even the most humble village or manor can be mysterious if you, the DM, choose to make it so.

### I seem to remember that a DRAGON issue had a WORLD OF GREYHAWK weather screen in it. Where can I get a copy of it?

The DRAGON Magazine issue was #68. You may check with the Mail Order Hobby Shop (P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147) to see if it is in stock (which is not likely), or you may be able to obtain a copy at a convention. Information on Oerik's weather can be found in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting's Glossography.

### How big is the Hepmonaland jungle, and what's in it?

The entire area of Hepmonaland is unexplored. No one knows how big it is or what is in it, except for those DMs who develop it for their campaigns.

### Which of TSR's modules are set in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting?

The following AD&D® game module series are set in or related to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting:

The "WG" series  
The "A" series  
The "C" series  
The "D" series  
The "Q" series  
The "S" series  
The "T" series  
The "EX" series

### The random-encounter tables include single-classed elven clerics equipped with edged weapons. Isn't this impossible in an AD&D game world?

Mr. Gygas's Greyhawk campaign was started long before the AD&D game came on the scene. The first rules used were the three booklets and (later) three supplements of the original D&D® game. In time, Mr. Gygas used what he learned from running Greyhawk to write the AD&D game rules. The campaign, which was older than the AD&D game rules, could not be switched over to them because the D&D game and AD&D game rules are not compatible. When TSR published the WORLD OF GREYHAWK fantasy setting, the editors decided to remain faithful to the original campaign. This is how this rule-breaker got in.

DMs have one of two options: You can be faithful to the AD&D game rules and not allow elven clerics to use edged weapons unless they are multiclassed, or you can remain faithful to the setting and allow elven clerics to use edged weapons. The latter choice will not cause any real problems if you are using just the *Players Handbook* rules. Elven-cleric advancement limits are low enough so that giving them edged weapons does not significantly effect play balance. If you are using *Unearthed Arcana*, however, I suggest that you not allow single-classed clerics of any race to use edged weapons. If you insist on maintaining an authentic WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting, then you should at the very least not allow single-classed elven clerics to exceed the normal advancement limits (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 8).

[A reference on page 4 of the Glossography from the boxed set refers to multi-classed fighter-cleric elves as "elven clerics." Fighter-cleric elves could indeed use edged weapons. This reference might be misunderstood to mean the elven clerics were single-classed, which might also be the problem.]

### What is the symbol of the pennon carried by the lead knight on the box cover?

The symbol on the pennon is the arms of Fax, a city on The Wild Coast, with a bar, azure, in fess (the blue horizontal stripe) added for distinction. This probably designates one of the more important noble families in Fax.

### Where can I get a map showing the boundaries of the various countries of the Flanaess?

Approximate boundaries are shown on page 44 of the Guide to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy Setting. Exact boundaries cannot be determined due to the political instability in the Flanaess.

### When do the "G" and "D" series modules take place?

These modules occur after CY 576 (see the Guide to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy Setting, page 9). The exact timing is up to the DM.

### Are non-Oerth deities usable in a WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting campaign? For example, can I use Bes for dwarves or one of the Norse deities for the frost barbarians?

The nonhuman deities from *Unearthed Arcana* are more suitable for a WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting than are Egyptian deities from *Legends & Lore*. Nordic deities would be appropriate for the various barbarians and nomads.

### How large are the hexes on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting's campaign map?

Each hex is 10 leagues (30 miles) across.

### Zuggtmoy (from T1-4 *The Temple of Elemental Evil*) is listed as a demon in the *Monster Manual II*. Does she have the usual demonic abilities and immunities?

Zuggtmoy has standard demonic abilities, as outlined on page 16 of the *Monster Manual*, in addition those listed on page 123 of *The Temple of Elemental Evil*.

### What is Oerik's relationship to Oerth's poles?

Oerik's latitude is given on page 18 of the boxed set's Glossography.

Ω



# Not Human Enough







Since this issue of DRAGON® Magazine is devoted to humanoids, we searched our files and found a number of creatures that look — at least a little bit — like humans.

# the Dragon's Bestiary

*Nonhuman creatures — with human form*

## BLACKTROLL

**Created by:** Michael J. Szarmach

**FREQUENCY:** *Uncommon in Abyss, very rare elsewhere*

**NO. APPEARING:** 1-8

**ARMOR CLASS:** 2

**MOVE:** 12"

**HIT DICE:** 7 + 10

**% IN LAIR:** 40%

**TREASURE TYPE:** E

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2 claws and 1 bite

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 7-14/7-14/2-12

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *Hurl rocks, spell use*

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** +1 or better weapon to hit, regeneration, spell use, various resistances

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 60%

**INTELLIGENCE:** *Average*

**ALIGNMENT:** *Chaotic evil*

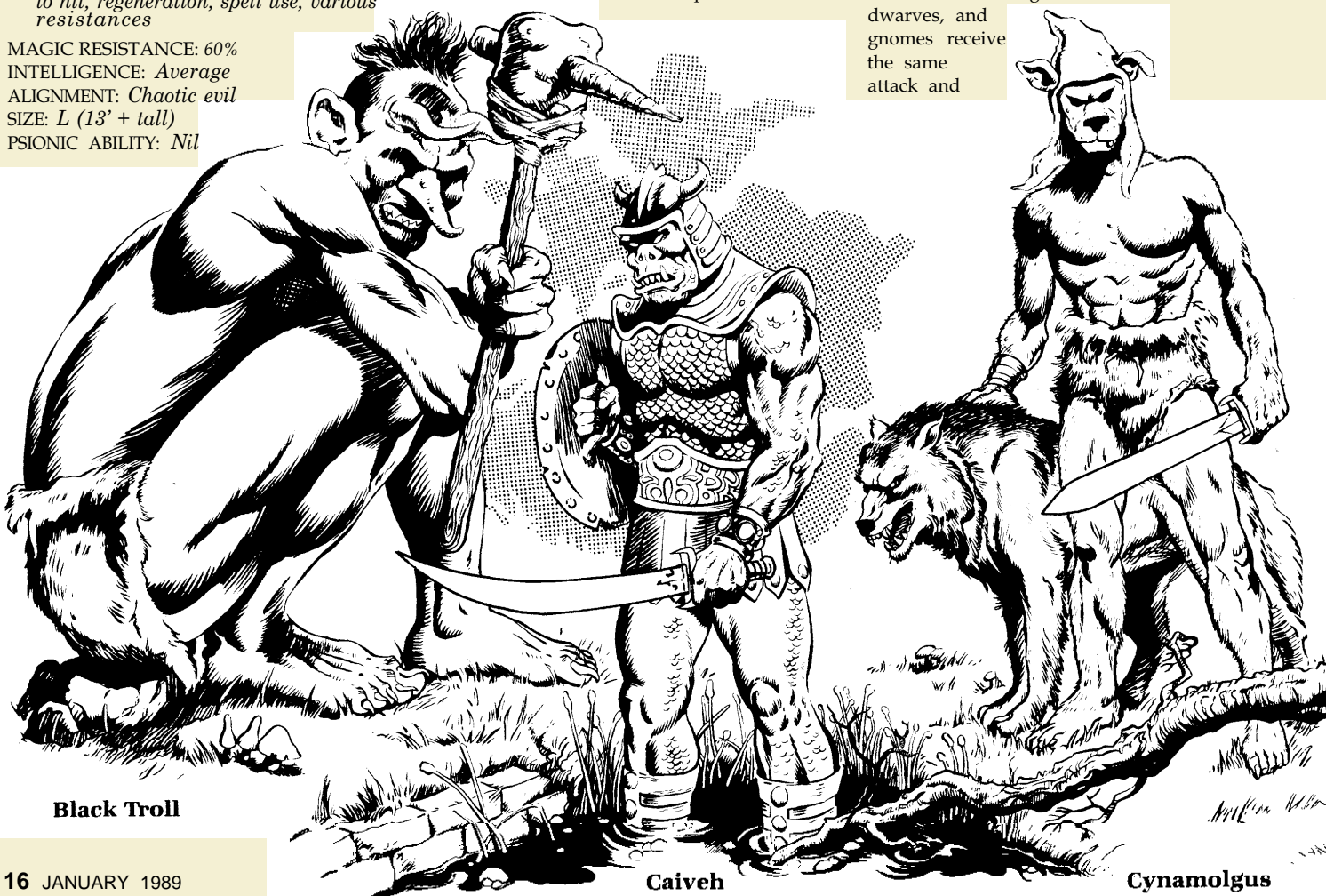
**SIZE:** L (13' + tall)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil

Black trolls dwell on some of the 666 layers of the Abyss and are believed to be descendants of normal trolls who were changed by demonic forces. Black trolls have 18/00 strength and can, in addition to their claw/claw/bite attacks, hurl rocks up to 180' for 1-10 hp damage each. The most powerful attack a black troll has is a 6-36 hp bolt of chained lightning (usable three times daily) that can ultimately injure every member of a party. A black troll can produce such a bolt ¼" wide and up to 7" long; black trolls sometimes use this attack during hand-to-hand combat because of their natural immunity to electrical attacks. Black trolls can also perform the

following spell-like abilities at will: *darkness 10' radius*, *pyrotechnics*, *telekinesis* (5,000 gp weight), *dispel magic*, and *teleport without error*. Black trolls can also gate in 1-2 normal trolls (40%), 2-5 dretch demons (20%), or another 1-2 black trolls (40%) with a 50% chance of success.

Black trolls take only half damage from cold and poison-gas attacks. Like other trolls, they regenerate 3 hp per round and can reattach all severed limbs. Among the largest of all trolls, black trolls have black skin, gleaming green eyes, and red horns. Unlike most trolls, they are smooth skinned and oddly humanlike in physical appearance. Black trolls are also known as demon trolls. Rangers, dwarves, and gnomes receive the same attack and



**Black Troll**

**Caiveh**

**Cynamolgus**

defense bonuses against black trolls as they receive against normal trolls or giant-size monsters.

## CAIVEH

Created by: Gregg Sharp

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1-10  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 MOVE: 18"  
 HIT DICE: 2 + 1  
 % IN LAIR: 40%  
 TREASURE TYPE: B  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws, or 1 weapon  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5, or by weapon type  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Berserker fury*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised only on a 1 in 6, thief skills*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Average to very*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*  
 SIZE: M (7' tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 ATTACK/DEFENSE: *Nil/nil*

Caivehs are occasionally found working in mercenary armies in human countries in tropical lands. If more than five caivehs are encountered, the group will be a family comprised of one male and three or more females. Caivehs resemble humans but with strongly leonine features. Half an inch of long fur covers most of their bodies, and the males have thick manes that add greatly to the lion image (they are called lion men by most peoples).

About one in 10 caivehs possess the ability to go berserk in certain circumstances. If surrounded or cornered by hostile forces, psionically assaulted, or captured and taunted, a caiveh berserker has a 75% chance of going into battle-rage. If the caiveh tries to suppress this rage, the chance of entering berserker fury drops to 45%. A caiveh in this state of mind has intelligence and wisdom scores of 1, but his strength rises to 18/00, which allows a +3 to hit and +6 to damage scores. While berserk, a caiveh tosses aside all weapons and uses its claws alone, with appropriate combat bonuses.

If encountered as part of a military unit, caivehs use human-style weapons. If a family unit or pride of caivehs is encountered, it relies on the following weapons in order of preference: falchion sword, hand axe, broad sword, trident, claws.

Caivehs are quite stealthy by nature and possess a number of thieving abilities, as shown below. Note that the percentage chance given in parentheses is the chance of performing the skill within the caiveh's native setting. This setting is always situated in a forested or mountainous tropical region.

### Thief ability

Move silently  
 Hide in shadows  
 Hear noise  
 Climb natural surfaces

### Chance of success

25% (95%)  
 20% (75%)  
 15% (35%)  
 85% (95%)

## CYNAMOLGUS

Created by: Ronald C. Morgan II

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*  
 NO. APPEARING: 20-200  
 ARMOR CLASS: 5  
 MOVE: 12"  
 HIT DICE: 1  
 % IN LAIR: 25%  
 TREASURE TYPE: L on individuals; B, Q (X 2), S, X in lair  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 weapon  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Resistance to fear*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*  
 SIZE: M (6' + tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Cynamolgi live in loose bands, usually in woods and near rivers. They are ferocious warriors who are resistant to fear; as a result, fear spells have only a 10% chance of affecting them. Bands of cynamolgi often war upon each other, except in times of great trouble when they occasionally join forces for a few weeks at most.

For every 20 cynamolgi encountered, a leader with 8 hp (attacking as a 2-HD creature for 3-9 hp damage) is present. This leader possesses a magical item 15% of the time and has average intelligence. If over 100 cynamolgi are encountered, the band includes: a subchief (AC 4, 12 hp, attacks as a 3-HD creature for 4-10 hp damage); 2-8 guards (AC 4, 10 hp, attacks as a 2-HD creature for 3-9 hp damage); and 2-6 war dogs (16 hp each). The guards are each 25% likely to have one magical item,



Diurge

Jor

Rock Troll



and the subchief always has one magical item, usually a weapon.

While cynamolgi normally live in the wild, they sometimes move into abandoned villages or huge caves. In these cases, the cynamolgi (15% chance keep 1-4 wolves around as guards. There is usually a chief in these habitats, a huge cynamolgi (AC 3, 16 hp, attacks as a 4-HD creature for 6-12 hp damage) who has a powerful magical item and keeps a wolf with maximum hit points.

Cynamolgi may employ any type of weapon, although they prefer swords, maces, and pole arms. Cynamolgi are chaotic but not actually evil. They have their own language, which sounds much like the barking of dogs. Cynamolgi appear to be dogheaded men of normal dog breeds and colors. Cynamolgi dress themselves in poorly cured animal skins. Their average life expectancy is 30 years.

## DIURGE

Created by: Scott Bennie and Steve Sloane

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 4-40

ARMOR CLASS: 4, with bonuses for dexterity

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 6 (9)

% IN LAIR: 65%

TREASURE TYPE: M, N, Q (X 3) on individuals; F in lair

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 touch, or 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4, or by weapon type

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Energy drain, psionics*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better weapon to hit, regeneration, various resistances

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard (45%)*

INTELLIGENCE: *High to genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil (Lawful evil)*

SIZE: M (5½-6½' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 141-240 (181-280)

Attack/Defense Modes: All/All

Diurges are humanoid natives of the Negative Material plane who live in a nightmarishly twisted mirror of the Prime Material plane called Darkrealm. Diurges serve the evil lords who rule Darkrealm,

but they occasionally venture to the Prime Material plane to wreak havoc. They have two castes: common and commander. Game statistics for commander diurges are listed in parentheses following the normal entries. For every 10 diurges encountered, one commander is present. The statistics for each caste are shown in the accompanying table.

Armor classes of diurges are AC 4 at base (from innate power, not from armor, which is not worn), with dexterity adjustments. All common diurges are fighters at the same level of proficiency as their hit dice (i.e., 6th-level fighters). In addition to being 6th-level fighters, diurge commanders are also 9th-level magic-users. Diurge commanders are limited by no weapon restrictions, and they may use any magical item appropriate to magic-users or fighters.

In combat, a diurge will often elect to attack by touch rather than with a weapon. The touch of a diurge carries a powerful sting, inflicting 1-4 hp damage and draining life energy sufficient to cause a loss of 5,000 xp from the victim. Furthermore, for each 5,000 xp thus drained, the diurge restores 10 of its own lost psionic points. A diurge is unaffected by non-magical weapons and regenerates 2 hp per round for any damage (provided the diurge is above zero hit points).

Diurges are unaffected by *charm, hold, or sleep* spells, as well as by paralysis, poison, *polymorph* spells, and life-level losses. Although not technically undead, common diurges can be turned by clerics with the same chance of success as against liches; commanders can be turned as special cases. Diurges sustain triple damage from spells which employ the energy of the Positive Material plane.

Common diurges have one or two psionic disciplines from the following list: *body equilibrium, detection of magic, domination, ESP, levitation, molecular agitation*. Commander diurges possess two to four psionic disciplines from the above list, with the following additional choices: *aura alteration, molecular manipulation, probability travel, telekinesis*.

Diurges have dark gray skin, white or

metallic-red hair, and solid red orbs for eyes. Otherwise, they are human in appearance. Diurges have ultravision and infravision. They are extremely sadistic, bear no love to any creature, and are highly manipulative in the pursuits of their goals. As a common goal, most diurges work toward conquering all forms of life in the most painful, ruthless manner possible. Individually, these creatures are not particularly selfish or greedy, and are thus capable of working together to achieve this common goal.

## JOR

Created by: Michael J. Szarmach

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-20 (20-200 in lair)

ARMOR CLASS: 5 or 6

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 2 + 3

% IN LAIR: 35%

TREASURE TYPE: K, M on individuals; O, U in lair

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 weapon

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Back-stabbing, poison, surprise on 1-3*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Hiding, surprised on 1 in 8*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average (low)*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Jors, also known as swamp orcs, are the most powerful and cunning breed of orcs. They have developed limited assassin abilities which they use to the utmost advantage. When surprising any victim, jors have a 35% chance to kill by back-stabbing. In addition, jors make a special sleeping poison from swamp plants and waters. They use this poison to coat their weapons (saving throw vs. poison at +2 or sleep for 2-12 rounds; one use only). Jors are extremely hard to find in the swamp and are surprised only on a 1 in 8 as a result. In addition, they have a 50% chance to hide in natural terrain. Jors surprise on a 1-3 in 6, and are typically armed as follows:

| Weapons                 | Chance of having |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Scimitar and crossbow   | 30%              |
| Scimitar and shield     | 30%              |
| Bastard sword and axe   | 10%              |
| Bastard sword and spear | 20%              |
| Battle axe and flail    | 10%              |

Jors wear a form of scale mail armor (AC 6). Shield use betters this to AC 5.

Jors, like their orkish cousins, hate sunlight and are therefore found outside their lairs only after sunset. For every group in excess of 15 jors, there is a leader and two assistants. Each leader and assistant has 18 hp, and because they are the strongest

Diurge Statistics Table

|              | Common             | Commander          |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Strength     | 16-18 <sup>1</sup> | 16-18 <sup>1</sup> |
| Intelligence | 14-17              | 15-18              |
| Wisdom       | 13-16              | 14-17              |
| Dexterity    | 12-17 <sup>2</sup> | 13-18 <sup>2</sup> |
| Constitution | 13-18 <sup>3</sup> | 16-19 <sup>3</sup> |
| Charisma     | 13-16              | 15-18              |
| Comeliness   | 3-12               | 5-20               |

<sup>1</sup> If strength is 18, there is a 50% chance of the diurge having exceptional strength.  
<sup>2</sup> Dexterity bonuses apply to armor class.  
<sup>3</sup> Constitution bonuses for hit points apply to each hit die the diurge has.

and most cunning creatures of their group, also have a 50% chance to kill when back-stabbing. If 30 or more jors are encountered, the group includes a sub-chief (AC 3, 3 +4 HD) and 1-4 bodyguards (AC 4, 3 + 1 HD). This large group also contains a master jor (AC 3, 4 + 2 HD) who has a 75% chance to kill when back-stabbing. A master jor also has a 90% chance to hide in natural terrain and surprises on 1-5 in 6. Jors general travel through swamps in small hunting parties composed of young males.

Jor lairs contain females equal to the number of males. All females fight as well as the males but have a less-effective back-stabbing ability (15% chance to kill when employing this tactic). Jor lairs also contain jor young (AC 8, 1 HD, noncombatants) equal to 150% of the males. In addition, each lair contains the following: a chief (AC 2, 4 + 5 HD), two subchiefs, 4-16 bodyguards, 12-15 leaders, and 1-6 master jors. Jor chiefs always have the abilities of master jors.

The jors and lizard men are great rivals in the swamp, and they often attack each other on sight. Jors look much the same as orcs, except that their skin tends to be greenish blue in color. It is rumored that all jors belong to an assassin's guild whose goal is to destroy mankind bit by bit.

rock troll suffers 8 hp or more damage in one attack, it drops its opponent.

The rock troll regenerates 2 hp per round beginning three rounds after initial damage is sustained. A transmute rock to mud or passwall spell destroys any rock troll within the spell's area of effect unless a saving throw vs. death magic is made at - 5. When in rocky surroundings, rock trolls surprise their opponents on 1-3 on 1d6 and are themselves surprised only on a 1 on 1d8. Their senses of smell are acute, and their infravision has a range of 50'. Rock trolls have strengths of 19 (hill giant strength) and add + 7 to all damage done as a result.

Rangers, dwarves, and gnomes receive the same attack and defense bonuses against rock trolls as they receive against normal trolls or giant-size monsters. Rock trolls are able to bat away missiles such as arrows, bolts, darts, and bullets 25% of the time, but they must use one claw attack to do so. Missiles such as spears, javelins, hand axes, and so on can be deflected 10% of the time, and giant boulders can be caught 15% of the time. However, machine-hurled missiles (from catapults or ballistas) cannot be deflected, and rock trolls will sustain damage from them if they try to catch them (which many will do until they learn better).

Though larger than regular trolls, rock trolls are similar in appearance to their

cousins. A rock troll's skin coloration will change to correspond with that of nearby rock types, shifting from light brown to dark gray. Ω

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## ROCK TROLL

*Created by: Linda Hankins*

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-12

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 9

% IN LAIR: 30%

TREASURE TYPE: Q

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 9-14/9-14/3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Automatic bites, surprise on 1-3*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Regeneration, missile deflection, surprise 1 in 8*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SIZE: *L (11' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Rock trolls usually dwell on the elemental plane of Earth but have been known to dwell in dungeons, caves, and remote mountains on the Prime Material plane. Rock trolls attack first with their two claws, then with a gnashing bite. If both claw attacks successfully strike a medium- or small-size opponent, the victim has been grabbed and is automatically hit with a bite at +2 to damage. Following the first bite, the victim may break free from the rock trolls grip with a successful bend bars/lift gates roll (with a + 10% modifier to the chance). If the victim fails, he is hit with two bite attacks the next round (with the same modification to damage). If the



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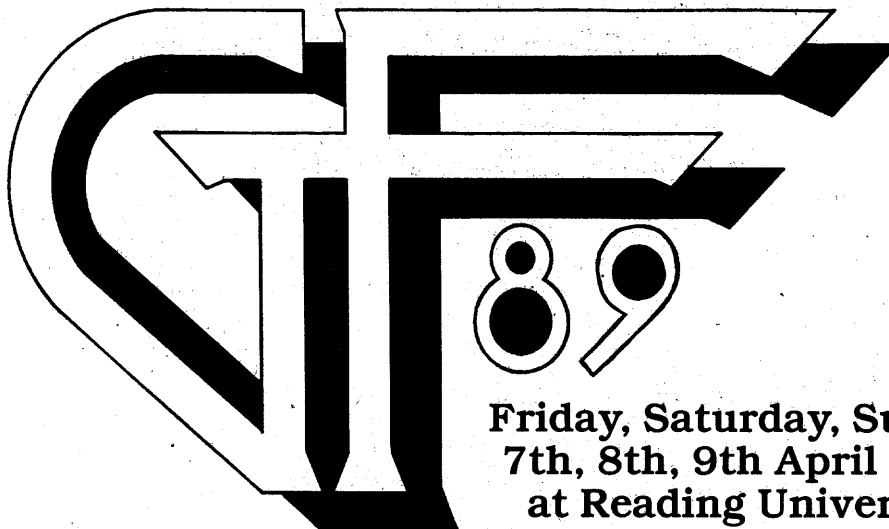
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by Randal S. Doering

# Orcs Throw Spells, Too!

*Humanoid and giant spell-casters  
for AD&D® games*

In the highly magical worlds of the AD&D® game universe, the ability to manipulate magic often determines the winner in a conflict. Thus, the various AD&D game books contain more information on spell-casters than on any other type of character. Yet, since only humans and demi-humans are allowed to be player characters, very little information has been given in regards to a third set of spell-casters: the humanoids.

All the information pertaining to humanoid spell-casters can be found in a few brief paragraphs in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Legends & Lore*. While this information is excellent for setting up the bare statistics of a humanoid spell-caster, it does not go far toward helping the DM run such an unusual NPC. This article begins with tips on creating, preparing, and playing humanoid spell-casters, then addresses how these beings gain and keep their powers. New lists of spells are given to bring the *DMG* lists up to date with *Unearthed Arcana*, and level limits are suggested for new humanoids given in the *FIEND FOLIO®* tome and *Monster Manual II*. Finally, there is a section devoted to specific religious practices performed by each individual humanoid race and how these practices can be used by the DM to help flesh out humanoid spell-casters.

## Purposes and problems

The humanoid spell-caster represents the means employed by a humanoid deity to promote the deity's religion, unite the humanoid's tribe, and give the tribe defenses against its magic-wielding human and demi-human foes. Humanoid spell-casters are not meant to be capable of sustained magical combat, but serve instead as buffers between the human-related races and the humanoids. Thus, their abilities tend to concentrate on protective and miscellaneous magic rather than on battle magic.

The *DMG* suggests that humanoid spell-casters are rare, but there is no reason given for this lack of competent masters among the humanoid races. A careful look, however, reveals two excellent reasons for a lack of spell-casters among humanoids. The first is the warrior tendency of these races. The second is (bluntly put) the stupidity of the humanoids.

From the puniness of the 1/2-HD kobolds to the terrible might of the 14-HD fog giants, humanoids are characterized by violence. Of over 24 humanoid races, less than a half dozen are good or neutrally aligned; the rest are downright evil. These masses of wicked creatures live by raiding their neighbors. Their energies are thus spent in preparing for and conducting wars. Little time is left for anything else. Young humanoids grow up learning how to wage war; those young that cannot keep up with the physical regimen of such a life quickly die, leaving ranks upon ranks of hardened warriors. This is hardly an auspicious beginning for a young spell-caster!

In the larger humanoid bands, however, especially those that are settled and enjoy some measure of security, there occasionally arises a youngster who can survive the physical rigors of humanoid life and is not satisfied with them. This individual is too weak to seek physical power but wants some means of gaining an advantage over his peers. If this individual is very lucky, he could become spell-caster.

Now a new factor works against these few: the stupidity of the humanoid races. On the whole, humanoids tend to be a dim-witted and barbaric lot. Those born with unusual intelligence or wisdom learn to use their spell-casting abilities ruthlessly or are killed by jealous rivals. Added to this is the fact that other humanoid bands are often jealous of any tribe with a spell-caster. Thus, unusually gifted humanoids face a dismal future, and most of these do not survive their apprenticeships or the more dangerous process of self-teaching.

This simple reasoning demonstrates why the *DMG* suggests that humanoid spell-casters are so rare that they should be placed by the DM. Unfortunately, there are no guidelines to follow in this process. To a beginning DM, taking great care in placing humanoid spell-casters might mean including only one or two witch doctors or shamans per group of human-









oids. To aid the beginning DM and give the experienced DM a hand in determining the frequency of such NPCs, the following guidelines are offered.

Assuming that shamans are more common than witch doctors (since witch doctors are the more powerful of the two), there is a 5% chance for a shaman to appear per 25% of the maximum strength of a humanoid band. For example, the number of gnolls usually encountered is 20-200. If there are 50 gnolls (25% of the possible maximum), there is a 5% chance for a shaman to be present. In a group smaller than 50 gnolls, there is no chance for a shaman to be present; a band of that size could not protect its shaman well enough and would quickly lose its spell-caster. This applies to all humanoid bands: No spell-casters are ever encountered in a group smaller than one-quarter of its maximum size, as given in the AD&D game rules. This principle works in 25% increments — that is, in a group of 99 gnolls, there is still only a 5% chance for a shaman to be present, but at 100 gnolls, the chance jumps to 10%. This serves to keep the chance of a shaman appearing to a minimum and increases the scarcity of spell-casters.

Shamans are a silver-piece-a-dozen, however, when compared to witch doctors. These more powerful humanoids

have mastered two forms of magic, something that only the rarest of even demi-human or human spell-casters accomplish. The chance of meeting a witch doctor is also based on 25% increments, but the probability of meeting a witch doctor is only 1% per increment. This means that a huge pack of 400 kobolds is only 4% likely to have a witch doctor in its midst.

Don't use this system for humanoids who run in very small bands (e.g., giants), or there will be too many such spell-casters. When the maximum normal size of a humanoid group is 20 or less, the chance of a shaman appearing in the group is a flat 5%; for a witch doctor, there is a 1% chance. Of course, if the group is unusually large (i.e., 20 stone giants), the DM might wish to double or even triple this chance. As with lesser humanoids, groups of giants must have enough members to support a spell-caster, since the spell-caster is too busy with arcane arts to hunt or otherwise support basic survival functions. Thus, giant spell-casters appear only with groups which have half or more of the maximum normal group size for that type of giant.

No humanoid tribe has both a shaman and a witch doctor, and the shaman is always checked for first. The system given above reflects the small numbers of humanoid spell-casters (especially witch doctors); it should keep humanoid spell-casters uncommon enough to retain the excitement of their use.

### Creating the spell-caster

When the dice or the DM have determined that a humanoid spell-caster exists in a group of humanoids, the DM must take pains to create a well-balanced NPC. The guides given in the official rules are vague in assigning levels to these rare creatures, and leave room for creating NPCs with too little or too much power.

A humanoid spell-caster should be assigned levels based on the strength of his band, using the maximum normal group size divided by the maximum level of spell use possible for that race, rounding fractions up. The following examples help illustrate how to assign levels to humanoid spell-casters.

*Example one:* Ogres appear in groups of up to 20 individuals, and ogre shamans can rise to 3rd level in experience. Thus, for every seven ogres, the shaman will have one level of experience.

*Example two:* Hobgoblin witch doctors can rise to 7th level as clerics and 4th level as magic-users. The maximum "Number Appearing" for hobgoblins is 200. For every 30 hobgoblins, the witch doctor will have one level of clerical experience; for every 50 hobgoblins, the witch doctor will have one level of magic-user experience. In a group of 170 hobgoblins, then, the witch doctor will be a 6th-level cleric and a 4th-level magic-user.

Note that, by the suggestions given earlier, no 1st-level ogre shaman could ever be

met, since no spell-casters can appear in groups, of less than one-half the maximum normal group size for humanoids which run in bands of 20 or less. By the same token, no hobgoblin witch doctor could ever be met as a 1st-level cleric, since there must be at least 50 hobgoblins (25% maximum "Number Appearing") for there to be any chance of a spell-caster in the group in the first place. Low-level spell-casters can be added by the DM as apprentices (5% chance of 1st-level cleric per tribe with higher-level shaman, and 1% chance of low-level witch doctor per tribe with the same) or as solitary spell-casters (give each tribe without a spell-caster a flat 5% chance to have a 1st-level cleric and a 1% chance to have a low-level witch doctor), or the DM may dispense with them entirely in favor of slightly higher-level humanoid spell-casters.

Once the spell-caster's levels have been assigned, he is ready to receive his spells. No humanoid shaman has access to every spell for every level of spell use he is capable of employing. A humanoid shaman is limited to knowing two spells per spell level (out of the lists given later in this article) and must choose his daily spells from them by praying for them, as does a human or demi-human cleric. No spell books are kept of these spells, though the shaman can use clerical scroll spells (if he can read). This limited knowledge is a function of being primarily self-taught and serves to vary the spells available to each shaman. The DM can roll for spells randomly or assign them.

Shamans gain knowledge of two new spells per level, either from the prior level lists or from the next highest list, if the shaman just gained a new level of spell use (a shaman just gaining 3rd level would learn two second-level spells). These new spells are taught to the shaman by a more experienced shaman or more often by a servant of the shaman's deity. The shaman must meditate and pray to "charge" the spells he desires for the day, drawing from those spells known to the shaman. The rest of the spells in the shaman's mind are spells which he knows but for which he has insufficient power to use (so they cannot be cast by the shaman that day). Shamans do not gain bonus spells for high wisdom, as is explained later, but have normal chances of spell failure.

Witch doctors gain their clerical spells as do shamans, but they have the added responsibility of maintaining spell books for their magic-user spells. A witch doctor starts with three random first-level spells for his spell book and is given one new spell per level earned. The new spell is of the highest level of magic usable by the witch doctor. Witch doctors must check newly acquired spells for understanding, as must any magic-user (a very important point if a PC's spell book falls into a witch doctor's hands). The lists given later in this article are for those spells which are commonly handed down from witch doctor to

witch doctor.

It is recommended that each witch doctor be given one or two spells from outside these lists to give each witch doctor an individual flair. Consider an infamous kobold witch doctor with a charm *person* spell or a feared hobgoblin witch doctor with *magic missile*. Such NPCs will be widely known and will add excitement as characters get a chance to test themselves against them. Witch doctors have only one set of spell books; these are considered to be traveling spell books for all intents and purposes, for the witch doctors haven't the time, money, nor skill to make better (see *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 79-80).

A quick glance at the magic-user spell lists given later reflects a basic problem for the witch doctor's spell books, in that the witch doctor has no way to read or write new spells. If the DM decides to stay with this ruling, as given by the lack of these spells in the official lists, it is certain that the witch doctor's spell book will be nothing more than a collection of loose pages taken from many sources. This spell collection is very sloppy and certainly cannot have magical protections set upon it. In addition, the collection is worth only half experience-point and monetary values for a PC who captures it. If the DM wishes the humanoid spell-caster to have true spell books, along with the power to read and write more spells, he must award the witch doctor *read magic* and *write* in addition to the witch doctor's other starting spells. This will make the witch doctor far more versatile and powerful.

The humanoid spell-caster is an important part of his tribe and should be protected as such by the tribe. Such persons are often surrounded by guards equal in ability and in number to those who guard the subchieftain. In addition, the spell-caster stays near the war leader, combining his many bodyguards with magic to create a potent defense. War leaders are certain to defend their tribal spell-casters, for those shamans or witch doctors are the only defense against magic their tribe may have. A final wise defense for the spell-caster is placing guard animals near him. Most humanoids employ guard animals, and these animals are often tougher than the races for whom they work. Imagine a low-level party running into several giant weasels, a dozen bodyguards, a war leader or two, and a kobold witch doctor all at the same time! In small groups of powerful humanoids (such as giants), there are no chieftains, bodyguards, and such. Nonetheless, all members of the band fight to protect their spell-caster.

#### Use of magical items

Once the spell-caster's protection is provided, all that remains is the consideration of magical items to be assigned.

Perhaps the greatest power held by a tribal spell-caster is the ability to employ magical items. With a little help from a *wand of fire*, a goblin witch doctor is a

frightful foe indeed. A *staff of command* would certainly make a hobgoblin shaman more terrible to meet.

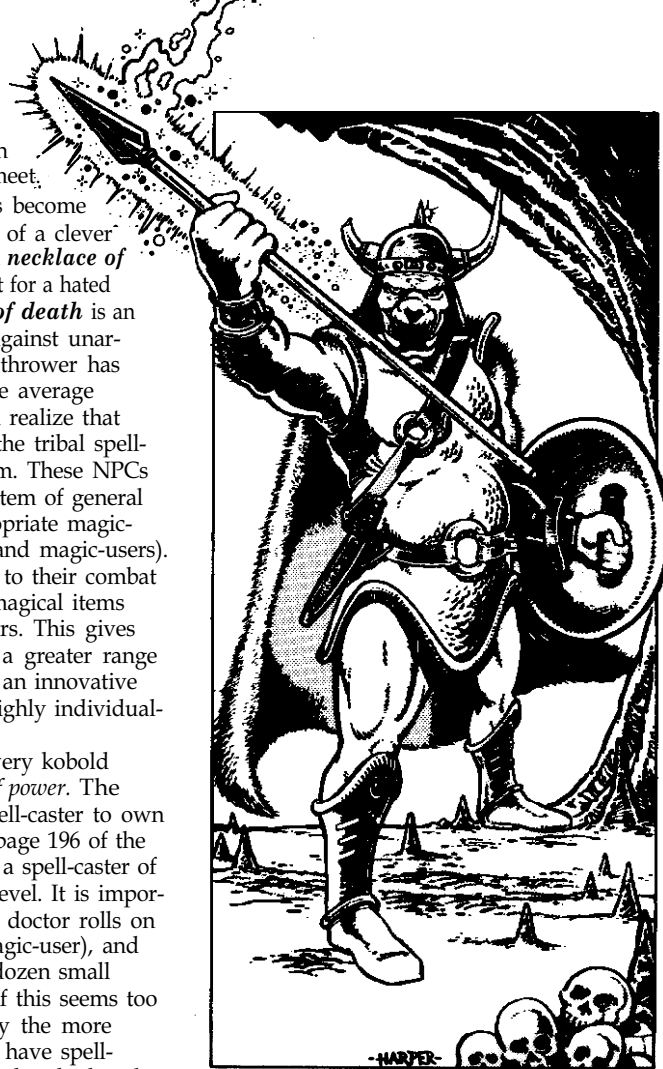
Even cursed magical items become deadly when in the hands of a clever humanoid spell-caster — a *necklace of strangulation* is a fine gift for a hated subchieftain and a *scarab of death* is an excellent missile weapon against unarmored foes (provided the thrower has heavy gauntlets). While the average humanoid would not even realize that such items were magical, the tribal spell-caster is very alert for them. These NPCs may employ any magical item of general use or of use by the appropriate magic-using classes (e.g., clerics and magic-users). In addition, shamans (due to their combat orientation) may employ magical items usually reserved for fighters. This gives the humanoid spell-caster a greater range of items to use and allows an innovative DM the chance to create highly individualistic NPCs of this sort.

This is not to say that every kobold witch doctor has a *staff of power*. The chance for a humanoid spell-caster to own magical items is given on page 196 of the *DMG*, treating the NPC as a spell-caster of the appropriate class and level. It is important to note that the witch doctor rolls on two tables (clerical and magic-user), and will probably have half a dozen small magical items as a result. If this seems too liberal, remember that only the more powerful humanoid bands have spell-casters at all, and that such bands do a lot of raiding. The spell-caster will be certain to examine new treasures closely for a chance to increase his power, and will thus collect as many items as possible.

The DM can also choose to assign magical items, realizing that one or two potions and a scroll should be nearly standard equipment for a humanoid spell-caster. Luckier ones might have a magical ring or wand. Whichever method is used, keep in mind that the PCs might capture this magical equipment during the course of the adventure. As a result, these items should not be enough in quantity or quality to make the victorious party too powerful and thereby damage the campaign.

#### Playing the spell-caster

The shaman is a tribal cleric. He has the functions of any cleric — that is, to revitalize and protect himself and the war leader. Because the deities served by such NPCs are usually evil, the shaman carries more offensive and defensive spells than curative spells. As a result, *cause light wounds* is often a favorite spell, as are *dispel magic*, *chant*, etc. Cures are often saved for use after a battle by the shaman or perhaps the war leader. The shaman's deity believes in strength and does not expect such magic to be wasted among common members of the tribe. Indeed, the shaman very rarely uses magic to directly aid common humanoids, although he is cer-



tain to point out how powerful the magical aid is to himself and to the war leader. For those shamans serving neutral or good deities, a more balanced spell selection is possible as dictated by the situation. Such shamans are more likely to share their powers and use them to benefit other members of their bands.

The humanoid deities have little to do with the undead and grant their worshipers no power with the thinking undead (ghouls and greater undead). A glance at the spell lists in the *DMG* shows that *animate dead* is not on the original spell lists — humanoid shamans are content to let human clerics dabble with their own dead, while the humanoids concentrate on spells of war. However, shamans of evil alignment can command weak undead into their service as can any evil cleric ("weak" being defined as skeletons and zombies). Neutral and good shamans can turn these lesser undead but cannot command them. These shamans have no power over the thinking processes of the undead.

Shamans are fully expected to fight and are given extra power (hit points) to aid and support their battle conquests, as noted in the "Nonhumans' Deities" section of *Legends & Lore*. Shamans are not restricted to blunt weapons but are limited to weapons used by that humanoid



type. Fire-giant shamans use great swords; kobold shamans use short swords, axes, spears, or spiked clubs; and so forth. Shamans are expected to show bravery and bloodlust, and are expected to melee frequently. They may thus wear any sort of armor without penalty and may use the best armor and weapons available to their tribes.

As noted earlier, shamans do not gain additional spells for high wisdom scores. This is due to the fact that all humanoid deities value strength over magical prowess. These deities grant spells only to prove the might of the gods in the first place, and they will not allow any shaman to become dependent solely upon magic to defeat foes. Consequently, these deities grant only a bare minimum number of spells to their shamans.

Witch doctors live by the same rules as shamans insofar as their clerical spells are concerned. However, witch doctors are not allowed to wear armor or use any weapons other than the standard magic-user weapons. Because witch doctors are magic-oriented, they are not expected to battle. This magic-orientation also means that witch doctors cannot serve the standard humanoid deities (who consider them weaklings). Most witch doctors worship the most powerful demons and devils to buy their powers; the rest follow evil human or demi-human deities. This tends to alienate the humanoid deities, however, angering them and making them hostile toward the tribes with witch doctors. The witch doctor is forced to compensate by presenting a powerful image and casting many spells in frequent displays of power. Witch doctors invariably have impressive abodes filled with all sorts of grisly remains and unusual items.

This need for sheer power has several effects on witch doctors. First, they will instantly seize and hoard all suspected magical items brought into the tribe. Along this line, all witch doctors are very eager for an *identify* spell and will go to

any length to get it. Second, witch doctors use their spells and magical items freely, for it is imperative to maintain their tribe's confidence in their power. Tribes with witch doctors put up with trouble even from their own race, due to friction with the humanoid deities; because of this, tribal members want constant proof that their witch doctor is worth the trouble. Finally, witch doctors of maximum level (both as clerics and magic-users) are almost always the tribal leaders. At this point, they gain no more spell abilities and they need an advantage to stay in power. Their takeover at this point can be overtly physical (such as blowing the former leaders to bits) or subtle (such as casting *charms* on the leaders). In the former case, the witch doctor must have a great amount of power or the other members of the tribe will desert. The latter option opens a wide vista to the DM, who could, for example, set PCs warring against war leaders while the clever witch doctor stands back and watches all his foes destroy one another.

Witch doctors serving neutral or good deities are probably not excessively greedy or violent, although they are certainly secretive. They, too, are protective of their power and will go to great lengths to preserve it (usually through trickery and deception). Such witch doctors are not under nearly as much pressure as their evil counterparts and only rarely lead their tribes.

As a final note, no humanoid spell-caster ever builds or lives in a temple of any sort except for instances involving short periods of time (a few months at most). All humanoids are wanderers, as is evidenced by their low chances of being found in their lairs, and their deities prefer for them to live by hunting and raiding. A temple means responsibilities which preclude a spell-caster from going on raids and impressing the tribe with the might of the deity. Furthermore, such an easy life would make the spell-caster lazy and

might even encourage weakness. The deities of the humanoids simply do not allow this sorry state to come about. Even among tribes that are settled, the worship area is plain and simply adorned so that the spell-caster need not waste time tending it. Among the spell-casters of neutral and good deities, this still holds true, for these groups wander as much as their evil cousins.

### New spell lists

The spell lists given on page 40 of the *DMG* need to be updated with spells from *Unearthed Arcana*. The spell lists provided in Tables 1 and 2 herein add the new spells to the old lists. Spells from *Unearthed Arcana* have been carefully selected to follow the same lines as those given in the *DMG* — that is, they contain primarily defensive and miscellaneous spells. The DM may alter these lists as he sees fit, keeping in mind that too many combat spells will certainly destroy the purpose of such an NPC. Spells taken from *Unearthed Arcana* are denoted by asterisks. Witch doctors can use cantrips but do not have any unless the DM specifically decides to assign them in each individual case. As a result, these spells are not included in Tables 1 and 2. Note also that humanoid spell-casters can use the reversed forms of any spell that is reversible.

### New humanoid spell-casters

With the addition of two new monster books to the AD&D game, the list of humanoids that can become spell-casters needs to be updated. Table 3 provides a list of some of these new races and the levels they may achieve as spell-casters. Races whose spell-casting classes are described in the books are not repeated in Table 3, nor are those races which have spell-like powers (for these cannot also use spells unless such is stated in their descriptions). The DM is free to modify the information given in Table 3 as necessary, perhaps adding such races as the qullan and others

**Table 1**  
**Clerical Spells**

| First level                 | Second level              | Third level               | Fourth level             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Ceremony</i> * * *       | <i>Aid</i> *              | <i>Cure blindness</i>     | <i>Cloak of fear</i> *   |
| <i>Cure light wounds</i>    | <i>Augury</i>             | <i>Cure disease</i>       | <i>Divination</i>        |
| <i>Detect evil</i>          | <i>Chant</i>              | <i>Dispel magic</i>       | <i>Exorcise</i>          |
| <i>Detect magic</i>         | <i>Detect charm</i>       | <i>Flame walk</i> *       | <i>Neutralize poison</i> |
| <i>Endure heat/cold</i> *   | <i>Detect life</i>        | <i>Locate object</i>      | <i>Spell immunity</i> *  |
| <i>Invisibility to</i>      | <i>Messenger</i> *        | <i>Magic vestment</i> *   | <i>Tongues</i>           |
| <i>undead</i> *             | <i>Resist fire</i>        | <i>Prayer</i>             |                          |
| <i>Light</i>                | <i>Snake charm</i>        | <i>Remove curse</i>       |                          |
| <i>Portent</i> *            | <i>Speak with animals</i> | <i>Remove paralysis</i> * |                          |
| <i>Protection from evil</i> | <i>(Un)holy symbol</i> *  | <i>Water walk</i> *       |                          |
| <i>Resist cold</i>          |                           |                           |                          |

\* These spells are taken from *Unearthed Arcana*.

\* \* Ceremonies usable by humanoid spell-casters include *coming of age*, *burial*, *dedication*, and *consecrate item*.

(such races were excluded primarily because they appear in numbers too small to support a spell-caster). Among giants, small groups are fine because giants are powerful enough to be able to allow one of their number to study and meditate instead of hunt. Among the comparatively weaker races, however, survival is too time-consuming to afford any member the luxury of not helping in the basic chores of survival. If this situation is different in a given campaign, the material presented herein and in the *DMG* should help a DM assign spell abilities to humanoid races.

Note that the upper level limits of 7th level for a shaman and 4th level for the magic-user abilities of a witch doctor are rules of steel which should *never* be bent. The humanoid mind is too coarse (even in such exceptional individuals as treated herein) to rise beyond these limits. If a higher-level spell-caster is needed, use an evil human or demi-human spell-caster.

### Deity/shaman relations

So far, this article has given guidelines to help the DM with humanoid spell-casters. This section is devoted to the relationships between specific humanoid deities and their shamans, addressing interesting practices and special powers that deities grant their shamans. These are helpful in adding detail to humanoid spell-casters, and thus create more unusual individual NPCs. Appendix 3 in the *Legends & Lore* tome (Clerical Quick-Reference Charts) gives good background for these practices and is useful in conjunction with what follows. The relationships detailed here are with primary deities only; relationships with lesser deities are up to the DM to detail.

### Bugbears

Hruggek is an exacting deity who demands that his shamans make sacrifices of at least two levels or hit dice of foe per level of the shaman, per month. Shamans who fail to meet this quota receive no spells for the following month. Shamans who exceed the minimum have a 1% chance per five additional levels or hit dice sacrificed of being granted one additional spell of the highest level usable by the shaman, for use over the next month. This spell is a gift that is usable only once. If the shaman fails to use the spell by the following month, the spell is taken back (though a replacement may be given as a result of abundant sacrifices). The shaman may choose his own bonus spell.

When gaining levels, these shamans must sacrifice the levels or hit dice of foes for each level the shaman possesses and 10 more for the level to be gained. Failure to make proper sacrifices earns instant death for the shaman, as Hruggek strikes him down. Exceeding this minimum by 20 or more levels or hit dice gives a 5% chance of the shaman earning one additional hit point (added to the roll for that level).

This system of reward for greater sacrifices urges bugbear shamans to conduct mass sacrifices and has earned them a grisly reputation among the weaker races favored as sacrifices.

### Ettins

Although ettins and hill giants both worship Grolantor, ettin practices differ greatly from those of their weaker kin. Ettins pay the deity homage not as a deity, but as an extremely powerful ettin. Because of this attitude, and the fact that Grolantor is the least intelligent humanoid deity, the god does not grant spells to ettin shamans (remember that first- and second-level spells are based on the faith of the shaman, with no help from the deity). Ettin shamans do not sacrifice to Grolantor and receive no special benefits from their deity.

### Giants, fire

Surtur demands nothing in the way of sacrifice from his shamans, but he has one rule which can never be broken: His shamans must never be defeated in personal combat. Those who are lose all clerical abilities and are marked by the deity so that other fire giants drive the outcast away. This mark is a flaming sword on the face of the outcast, the tip on the former shaman's chin and the pommel on his forehead. The mark is silver, in contrast to the giant's black skin, and can be seen even if covered or hidden. Even death does not remove this dishonor.

When Surtur's shamans reach 7th level, they are granted the power to summon one 8-HD fire elemental once per month. The summoning takes one melee round, and the elemental appears in 1-4 rounds, staying for six turns or until it is destroyed. The elemental acts independently of the shaman, who need not concentrate on controlling it. This power is a bonus ability and does not take the place of any of the shaman's spells.

### Giants, frost

Thrym is a demanding deity who follows the same code of battle as Surtur, with one twist: The frost-giant shaman who loses a battle dies on the spot. While Thrym demands no regular sacrifices, he requires that one human from every group of humans battled by the shaman's band be taken unhurt and frozen alive. Failure to do this results in the shaman being stripped of all power and being forevermore a standard frost giant.

Frost-giant shamans are subjected to rigorous tests for every level they attempt to gain. While tests vary, all involve combat against foes at least equal to the frost giant in hit dice and power (four ogres would be a good test). In addition, these shamans must sacrifice 5,000 gp in gems to Thrym for each level they have and 10,000 gp more for the level to be gained, each time they are eligible to gain a level.

As if this were not enough, any frost giant may challenge the shaman to a battle to the death at any time. The winner either keeps or receives the powers of the shaman. Thus, if a 5th-level frost-giant shaman were defeated by a standard frost giant, the winner would walk away with

**Table 2**  
**Magic-User Spells**

| First level                | Second level               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Affect normal fires</i> | <i>Audible glamor</i>      |
| <i>Alarm *</i>             | <i>Deeppockets *</i>       |
| <i>Dancing lights</i>      | <i>Detect invisibility</i> |
| <i>Identity</i>            | <i>In visibility</i>       |
| <i>Melt *</i>              | <i>Know alignment *</i>    |
| <i>Mount*</i>              | <i>Levitate</i>            |
| <i>Push</i>                | <i>Magic mouth *</i>       |
| <i>Run*</i>                | <i>Preserve *</i>          |
| <i>Shield</i>              | <i>Scare</i>               |
| <i>Ventriloquism</i>       | <i>Vocalize *</i>          |

\* These spells are taken from *Unearthed Arcana*.

**Table 3**  
**New Humanoid Spell-Caster Level Limits**

| Race         | Shaman<br>(clerical levels) | Witch doctor<br>(magic-user levels) |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aarakocra    | 7                           | -                                   |
| Bullywug     | 5                           | 2                                   |
| Dakon        | 3                           | -                                   |
| Flind        | 5                           | 4                                   |
| Giant *      |                             | 2                                   |
| Grimlock     | 5                           | 4                                   |
| Ogrillon     |                             | -                                   |
| Taer         | 3                           | -                                   |
| Troll, giant | 3                           | -                                   |
| Vegepygmy    | 5                           | 2                                   |
| Xvart        | 5                           | 4                                   |

\* This includes fog, fomorian, mountain, and verbeeg giants.

A dash indicates that the race cannot employ magic-user spells and thus cannot have witch doctors.





the loser's extra hit points and the spell abilities of a 5th-level shaman.

In return for this risky life, the frost-giant shaman is granted two powers. Upon reaching 5th level, the shaman may create a *wall of ice* once per week as a 10th-level magic-user using the spell. At 7th level, the shaman may summon an 8-HD ice elemental from the plane of para-elemental Ice once per month. This ability works exactly like that of the fire-giant shamans (see previous section). Both of these powers are bonus abilities which are in addition to, not in place of, the shaman's full complement of spells.

#### **Giants, hill**

Hill giants worship Grolantor as a deity (unlike ettins, as noted earlier). Perhaps this is why hill giants may advance in levels so far beyond ettins. Hill-giant shamans are not required to make sacrifices to Grolantor, but most shamans like to sacrifice enemies and small valuables to the deity anyway. Grolantor occasionally rewards diligent shamans with a special magical club which provides a +4 to hit and damage against dwarves. This weapon works only in the hands of a hill-giant shaman and is useless to all others. There is a 5% chance for a hill-giant shaman of any level to own such a club.

#### **Giants, stone**

The shamans of Skoraesus Stonebones are allowed to live as they choose and are not required to make sacrifices or undergo trials to gain levels. Due to their closeness to the earth, however, these shamans are restricted from certain spells and are given access to spells which no other shamans may use. The forbidden spells have to do with elements other than earth; these include *resist fire*, *flame walk*, and *water walk*. In return, the following spells are added to the lists available to the stone giant shamans: *stone shape* (third-level druidic spell) is added to the list of third-level spell choices; *spike stones* (fifth-level druidic spell) is added to the list of fourth-level spells; and *wall of stone* (fifth-level magic-user spell) is added to the list of fourth-level spells.

Occasionally a stone-giant shaman is extremely devout to Skoraesus, sacrificing everything he owns to the deity and keeping not so much as a single copper piece or lowly potion. Skoraesus may grant such a shaman the power to cast an *earthquake* spell once per month as an added ability when the shaman reaches 7th level. The power takes one turn to activate and affects an area 60' in diameter; otherwise, it conforms in all other ways to the seventh-level clerical spell of the same name. There is a 5% chance for any 7th-level stone-giant shaman encountered to have this power.

#### **Gnolls**

The shamans of Yeenoghu have, without a doubt, the harshest deity in the humanoid pantheon. To maintain their power, gnoll shamans must sacrifice four levels or hit dice worth of enemies at each monthly ceremony in a trial by combat. The sacrifices are permitted natural weapons or a dagger, while the shaman is restricted to his flail and no magic (although a magical flail is permissible). If an intended sacrifice kills the shaman, the person or creature is free to leave.

When gaining levels, a gnoll shaman must scourge himself for 5 hp damage for each of his levels and 6 hp damage for the level he wishes to attain. Those shamans who cannot withstand the punishment for a new level are frozen at the level where they can stand the pain. For example, a shaman desiring to reach 4th level must have at least 21 hp or that shaman is stuck at 3rd level. This test ensures that only the toughest gnolls rise to power. It is assumed in this case that a gnoll shaman who scourges himself to zero hit points does not die but simply falls unconscious; a strike with a whip does 1 hp damage.

In return for these tests, the shamans receive the power to automatically command up to two ghouls per level, drawing these creatures into the shaman's service. Many gnoll shamans do away with gnoll bodyguards in favor of these loyal pets instead. Gnoll shamans need not roll dice

to wrest control of ghouls from clerics of other deities; their deity's relationship with ghouls automatically empowers them to control these creatures. Gnoll shamans are also allowed to choose *negative plane protection* as a third-level spell.

#### **Goblins and hobgoblins**

Goblin and hobgoblin shamans both worship Maglubiyet in his giant goblin form. The deity treats both races in the same manner. At each monthly ceremony, these shamans must sacrifice the living hearts of two levels or hit dice worth of foes per level of the shaman. It is vital to note that these foes must possess souls (spirits of animal life energy will not do); the Mighty One accepts nothing less. Failure to give proper sacrifices causes the shaman's spells and extra hit points to flee him in the next battle, never to return.

**[Humans, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, and half-elves are assumed to have souls; elves, half-orcs, and other beings do not.]**

To gain levels, the shaman must sacrifice the still-beating heart of a human warrior of a level equal to or greater than that which the shaman hopes to gain. The sacrifice must have been personally defeated in combat by the shaman or by use of the shaman's magic.

Maglubiyet's shamans may not use healing spells. This includes any spell with *cure* as part of its title, and includes *neutralize poison* as well. Goblin and hobgoblin shamans are free to use the reverses of these spells, as well as a few combat spells which Maglubiyet approves of: *command*, *spiritual hammer*, and *sticks to snakes*. In addition, those shamans who survive to 5th level are granted immunity to *fear* — even fear of a magical sort. It is said that the Mighty One absolutely refuses to see his shamans flee from fights.

#### **Kobolds**

Kobold shamans gain more from their position than any other humanoid shamans, for the extra hit points they receive put them far beyond their peers in survivability. As a result, Kurtulmak puts his shamans through rigorous tests.

Kurtulmak's shamans must personally slay the leader or subleader of all groups of foes that the shaman's band attacks. Shamans may use magic as well as weapons to accomplish this. For whatever reason, one failure permanently freezes a shaman at his current level. Two failures permanently strip a kobold shaman of all powers and extra hit points.

Kobold shamans must sacrifice gnomes to gain levels, the gnomes possessing as many levels between them as the shaman, plus one level for the level which the shaman is trying to gain. To gain final power (5th level), individual shamans must personally hunt down and capture the gnomes to be sacrificed. Any means to this end, including magical items, spells, and poisons, are acceptable, but the shaman

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must do the capturing alone and unaided by others. Failure or cheating at this endeavor permanently strips a kobold shaman of all power.

Upon attaining 5th level, kobold shamans are granted a unique ability: the power to *find traps* (as per the second-level clerical spell of that name). This ability is permanent and is granted as a natural extension of the race's love of traps and ambushes. For this reason, a high-ranking kobold shaman is often found in the front of his band when entering new territory. This ability works constantly without concentration, and it is in addition to the shaman's regular spell load.

### Lizard men

The worshipers of Semuanya are found only among civilized groups of lizard men, as the barbaric lizard men do not follow the gods code of neutrality. Shamans of the deity are not tested, although they are required to sacrifice 10% of all hunting trophies taken by the tribe. Civilized lizard men do not consider humans and demi-humans to be hunting trophies, and generally either let them go or hold them for ransom.

Semuanya's shamans strive for the emotionless reptilian ideal and are granted immunity from spells which play on the emotions (such as fear-related attacks, *symbols of hopelessness* or *discord*, and *confusion* spells). Furthermore, these shamans may attempt to dispel the effects of any emotion-influencing attack by touching the afflicted creature. The target then receives another saving throw versus the effect at +4 on the roll. Lizard-man shamans may use this power once per melee round any number of times per day. As with powers bestowed upon other shamans by their deities, this calming ability is a bonus.

### Locathah and mermen

Shamans of the locathah and merman races worship the same form of Eadro and are treated equally by the deity. Locathah shamans are limited to lower levels than mermen simply because they tend to be

more coldly logical than mermen and have difficulty placing faith in an unseen deity. Shamans of these races are ignored by their deity for the greater part and need make no sacrifices. Shamans gain levels automatically and need pass no tests except to have faith.

Eadro's shamans are forbidden the use of spells which involve fire, even spells which provide protection from that element. For compensation, locathah and merman shamans are allowed to choose *precipitation* and *cloudburst* spells to use against fire-wielding surface foes. In addition, certain outstanding shamans of maximum level (about 5% of the total) are given an enchanted conch shell by Eadro. This shell summons an 8-HD water elemental when blown. The elemental arrives the next round and stays for up to one hour or until destroyed. It will battle on its own, requiring no concentration from the shaman. Such shells are usable only by maximum-level shamans of Eadro and are not even magical in the hands of other beings.

### Ogres and trolls

Ogre and troll shamans worship Vaprak every time they kill something, and thus are not required to make formal sacrifices. When gaining a level, shamans of Vaprak must seek out and slay a creature of their own size and power (rival members of their own tribe will do). This combat must be done without the aid of magic and by using only natural body weaponry. Shamans who break these rules immediately lose all spells and extra hit points. In many cases, these shamans are slain by their own tribes.

There is a 2% chance in any battle that Vaprak grants berserk fury to one of his shamans, as noted on page 96 in *Legends & Lore*. The deity grants no other favors to its shamans. Shamans of Vaprak are forbidden the use of any healing and curative spells, though the reverse applications are encouraged.

### Orcs

The relationship between orcish sha-

mans and their minor deities is covered in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, volume III, in "The gods of the orcs." The only deity whose shamans are not described is Gruumsh; the shamans discussed here belong to that deity.


Orcish shamans in the service of Gruumsh are highly favored by that deity in his effort to outdo other deities, but the price for office is high. These shamans are allowed to keep only half their loot, sacrificing the rest to the deity. In addition, these shamans must make monthly blood sacrifices to Gruumsh, these being five levels or hit dice worth of creatures (animals are acceptable) per level of the shaman. Failure to meet this quota strips the shaman of one level per incident. If the shaman reaches zero level through such failure, he is used as a sacrifice by other shamans during the next ceremony.

Levels lost due to failure can be regained by further conquest.

Orcish shamans of Gruumsh can never lose a personal battle upon pain of instant death from above. If the shaman's tribe loses a battle, the shaman loses a level as noted earlier.

To gain a level, an orcish shaman must first battle any other orc who wants his position in a combat to the death. The winner of this fight either leaves with levels intact or has earned the right to begin training as a 1st-level shaman. Once challengers are dealt with, the shaman must then slay in combat a creature with levels or hit dice equal to his own. These battles come one after the other in one long ceremony, and the use of spells and magical items (other than acceptable magical weapons, or those types used by most orcs) is forbidden.

Gruumsh's shamans are not allowed to use curative spells of any sort on others, restricting such cures to themselves. The reverse applications are highly encouraged. As compensation for these rigors, Gruumsh grants two favors to his shamans. First, when hit points are rolled, two hit points are added to each level's roll. This extra favor from the deity gives orcish shamans of Gruumsh a large advantage in battle and encourages them to melee. Second, Gruumsh's shamans are extensively trained with weapons; allowing them to fight as full-fledged fighters of equal level. They have thus earned a reputation as fierce foes and are feared by most other humanoid races. Finally, certain shamans of Gruumsh are so outstanding in their destructive tendencies that the deity rewards each of them with a magical iron spear. In the hands of an orcish shaman, this weapon acts as a *spear +4* (hand-held, not thrown); this weapon is nonmagical to all other creatures. If an elf touches such a weapon, he or she receives 5-10 hp burn damage with no saving throw, and must drop the weapon. There is a 5% chance for any maximum-level shaman of Gruumsh to own such a spear. These weapons are not granted to lower-level shamans.



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### Sahuagin

Sahuagin shamans follow a savage code which results in small numbers of shamans among the race. These shamans are allowed no bodyguards and must protect themselves during battles. Furthermore, they are expected to be in the forefront of all attacks made by their tribe, fighting next to the war leaders. Sahuagin shamans can move up in rank only by slaying their immediate superior and thus must be ready to fight to retain their own positions. Battles for rank are fought with tooth and claw only; no weapons or magic are allowed.

In addition, sahuagin shamans must sacrifice foes worth three levels or hit dice per level of the shaman per month. Since ceremonies are irregular, shamans may save their quotas until a ceremony is performed. However, failure to sacrifice the proper amount of foes at this time will see the shaman fed to the sacred sharks instead.

Within a sahuagin tribe, 75% of the shamans are of the four-armed variety. To these shamans, Sekolah grants the ability to cast spells with one pair of arms and conduct melee with the other pair. This may continue as long as the shaman is not hit. As soon as the shaman is damaged, spell-casting ability is lost until the shaman can pull out of melee and regain concentration. This ability also allows these special shamans the ability to hurl or fire missiles and cast spells simultaneously.

At 5th level, four-armed sahuagin shamans are put through a tortuous ceremony which deadens their nerves, making the shamans virtually resistant to pain. Shamans of this level may melee and cast spells even after hit, as a result of this ceremony and the will of Sekolah. No other abilities come from this ceremony. *Symbols of pain* do not affect them.

Two-armed sahuagin shamans gain no special benefits and generally do not live long. They perform minor functions and act as cannon fodder for the more important four-armed shamans.

### Troglodytes

Shamans of Laogzed have a relatively easy life, for their deity generally ignores them. They make one sacrifice per year, involving the burning of humans with total levels equal to the shaman's levels. This quota is not difficult to meet; failure merely strips all clerical abilities until such time as the quota is met.

To gain levels, a troglodyte shaman sacrifices all of its earthly belongings, often tossing in a bonus human or two for good measure. Larger sacrifices are not rewarded, but withholding some item or items earns the shaman a painful death as soon as Laogzed catches the offender (which occurs within a few months, usually).

Shamans of Laogzed may not use fire spells (that is, *resist fire* and *flame walk*), but they may learn *cloudburst* and *create water* if they so desire.

### Witch doctors and deities

As, noted earlier, witch doctors are alienated from their humanoid deities by their desire to use magic more than brute force. Because of this, witch doctors are forced to worship all sorts of demons, devils, daemons, and various evil human and demi-human deities for their powers. There is no way to give specific examples of deity interactions for witch doctors, since there are so many different sorts of worshiped beings, but there are a few common rules which apply to all.

1. Any entity which a witch doctor worships is extremely powerful, for when such an entity supports a humanoid witch doctor it is directly snubbing the humanoid deities. Therefore, the entity must be a Prince or Lord among demons, an Arch-Devil among devils, a Greater daemon, or a deity of at least Lesser God status. For neutral shamans, the greater Hierarchy Modrons occasionally support worshipers on the Prime Material plane, and there are a few solars venturesome enough to sponsor the rare, good-aligned witch doctors. These entities take a great deal of interest in their witch doctors, since they have few worshipers on the Prime Material plane. As a result, they tend to grant more powers to their witch doctors in order to increase their power on that plane. These entities grant spells freely and often let unworthy sacrifices get by, as long as the witch doctor is actively furthering the patron's ends. Beings like these are liberal with gifts and spells outside the lists. Many allow their witch doctors to affect the undead, depending upon the entity's realm of influence and alignment. In addition, these beings tend to give out minor magical items to deserving witch doctors much more frequently than humanoid deities reward their shamans.

Finally, witch doctors may call upon divine aid from their deities, whereas a shaman would never dare admit weakness in this manner. If a witch doctor is in a situation where he will die, his pleas for aid have a 1% chance per clerical level of being answered. An answer to these pleas usually involves the worshiped being


sending servants to aid the witch doctor, although the patron occasionally simply *teleports* the shaman to safety. The patron *never* risks itself by appearing to aid its witch doctor, regardless of the witch doctor's level and power. A false alarm when praying for divine aid earns an immediate and gruesome death for the witch doctor, so most witch doctors are careful to be certain that death is at hand before trying this final option.

### Final notes

Humanoid spell-casters are an exciting opponent for any party to face, for they add an element of unpredictability and freshness to familiar foes. Even a mid-level party can be hard-pressed by a shaman or witch doctor with unusual spells and magical items, and lower-level parties may find these NPCs to be much more challenging than random hack-and-slash encounters. The addition of a few spells from *Unearthed Arcana* and from outside the lists as given in the *DMG* should give pause to those players who have the *DMG* memorized, and will add new twists to those campaigns where the DM has already made use of humanoid spell-casters. The DM can have plotting spell-casters weave intricate plots for clever PCs to unravel and can center entire adventures around famous humanoid spell-casters. With a great understanding of the motivations and desires of the humanoid spell-caster, the DM will be able to create many well-conceived, interesting NPCs of this sort to use and remember.

[Other articles that may be of use to DMs in developing shamans and witch doctors include: "The half-orc point of view" and "The gods of the orcs," from the *Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology, Vol. III*; "The humanoids," from the *Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology, Vol. V*; and "The Citadel by the Sea," in *DRAGON issue #78.*]

Ω



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by Arthur Collins

# Boulder-Throwers and Humanoid Hordes

*Giants, humanoids, and Dungeon Masters*

---

**G**iants and humanoids are the stock in trade of the Dungeon Master. They are basic to the AD&D® games, far more exotic monsters in the various reference books. Orcs, goblins, gnolls, giants, and the rest form the basic set of opponents for most beginning campaigns. Long before an adventuring group is ready to take on drow and dragons, it is ready for a bunch of hobgoblins.

The problem with giants and humanoids is that their strengths are their weaknesses. Sound strange? Look at it this way: Giants have awesome fighting power, giving and taking lots of hit points of damage. Humanoids can give and take less in combat, but they come in great numbers. This makes these foes challenging for low to mid-level parties, but dull for higher-level groups. Once you reach a certain level of magic-use and acquire a certain number of hit points and magical items, giants and humanoids aren't challenging any more. Goblins and kobolds are the worst; with less than one full hit die, they face fighters who get as many attacks per round as the fighters have levels. Additionally, giants and humanoids are lumped together in the giant-class category, against which rangers do extra damage. In the end, the most powerful groups of giants and humanoids only delay a party, not challenge it seriously.

So what can be done about it? Are these races simply not credible challenges after the party reaches a certain point? If you let that happen, the campaign will soon suffer from adventure inflation — the unwarranted expansion of magic, treasure, and treat that make so many campaigns dull. However, experienced DMs can use giants and humanoids effectively throughout the adventuring life of the PCs' party, but it takes knowledge of some tricks about DMing these monsters.

---



### The bigger they are...

Giants are like the old naval descriptions of battleships: eggshells armed with hammers. They are capable of dealing out awesome damage, but they come few in number. Thus, the first principle of using giants successfully is to take advantage of their long-range attacks. Most DMs play giants as close-and-bash types. However, most giants have special attack abilities with hurling boulders or other missiles.

These abilities should be taken seriously. There was a rather cocky wizard in my campaign who was twice splattered all over the side of mountain passes by giant-hurled boulders. He eventually learned not to lead the charge on his *broom of flying*. While even the rather stupid giants love to get up close and bash, it should be a point of honor among giants to see who wins at throwing contests. They may make bets on their abilities in leisure times. When

engaged in an ambush or open combat, they should almost always attempt to hurl boulders before closing.

Giants should use their missile-hurling capabilities in other ways. Giants may like fortified gateways and ravines alike, since attacking and defending from above are among their most basic tactics. Note the missile-fire cover and concealment adjustments in the *DMG*, page 64. Even underground, place giants on ledges and over



gateways (with rocks to throw). Smarter giants can construct powerful artillery weapons, which giants can pick up and use the way humans use crossbows or slings. Beware of giants with ballistas!

The second principle of using giants successfully is to exploit their magical talents and possessions. Remember that some giants can have clerical abilities. Giant shamans are more than most PCs bargained for. With abilities running up to 7th level, giant shamans are a lovely edge on the competition. Not every lair should have a shaman, perhaps, but certainly there should be a shaman for every tribe of giants in a given area. This also increases the amount of magic that the giants have to use against their enemies. Giant-size magical items should probably be avoided, since they may eventually wind up in the PCs' hands. Go for expendables, such as potions and scrolls, which the giants can use up in healing themselves and fighting the party. And don't forget that certain giant types, such as the firbolg, have innate magical abilities.

Third, take advantage of the giants' home turf. There is no reason why a giant lair should be easy to enter. Cloud giants live on cloud islands or mountain peaks; stone, fire, and frost giants live in often equally inaccessible places with their own dangers. In addition to making the PCs overcome the difficulties of reaching and entering the giants' lair, the DM should remember that giants do not neglect traps, guards, ambushes, alarms, patrols, and locks. If a giant constructs a trap, it probably causes more damage than one made by a man-size opponent.

Fourth, note that many giants have powerful pets: spotted lions, hell hounds, winter wolves, dire wolves, giant lizards, cave bears, and so on. In addition, many giants take slaves or live in cooperation with other giants and humanoids (ogres, orcs, etc.) who will fight if so ordered by the giants. Nor do the giants always have to be in charge. Giants can be found sharing their homes with dragons or else playing the roles of minions for a human magic-user or cleric (or a vampire or lich).

Giants can be found in all sorts of circumstances, both as leaders and followers.

Fifth, keep in mind those special touches that make for truly inspired refereeing. After all, there is nothing sacred about the statistics on giants. They can be tinkered with. How about giant undead, such as giant skeletons, giant zombies, giant liches, and giant mummies? How about frost giant *berserkers*? How about Oriental hill giants who have mastered martial arts and can kick PCs like footballs? How about firbolgs always approaching in man-size? How about using *regeneration*? *etherality*? *phasing*? lycanthropy? poison resistance due to large size? giant shades? The possibilities are endless.

### The more, the merrier

The first help to give humanoids is to improve their lousy generalship. DMs often use humanoids as cannon fodder. If these humanoids are really trying to survive in a tough world, why do they fight so stupidly? Humanoids have many missile weapons and a level of civilization that would seem to make them formidable guerrilla fighters. Why not use them in small raiding parties with missile weapons, acid grenades, and stealth? When the PCs invade the humanoids' home turf, the PCs should encounter stiff resistance. A humanoid lair, underground or above-ground, should be as well thought out and heavily defended with traps, guards, pets, patrols, ambushes, and fortifications as a human town or castle. The humanoids should fight tenaciously and intelligently in their home's defense. If the situation becomes untenable, they should evacuate with many vows of revenge. They should not just keep coming and coming to be ground into hamburger by the guys with the *swords of blending*, +3 (Oster). One must presume that the war chiefs are intelligent battle leaders, and play them as full-fledged NPCs.

Second, when they do go off to war *en masse*, use the BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement rules for combat with large, organized companies of humanoids, which gives them a greater advantage. A couple

of high-level fighter-types can stand and chop humanoids all day long under the normal melee rules, and they'll hardly get their armor scratched. But under the BATTLESYSTEM supplement rules for Character vs. Figure Combat, no PC can wipe out a whole unit of humanoids that fast, and in addition, the humanoids get a realistic chance to overwhelm a character that the humanoids probably can't even hit individually! If your players complain, point out to them that the humanoids are not just skirmishers; they are fairly disciplined, trained warriors engaged in a battle maneuver. Thus, BATTLESYSTEM supplement rules correct a deficiency that many of us saw long ago, making mass combat faster, more realistic, and better for the underdog humanoids.

Third, humanoids also have shamans and witch doctors. These spell-casters can gather magical items, undead, and other spell-casters to wreak havoc on a PC party. Even if a hobgoblin shaman doesn't have many effective spells, the extra hit points from being a shaman help him better stand up to opponents.

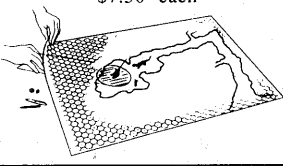
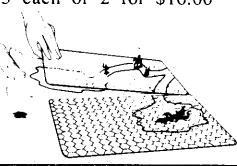
Fourth, like giants, humanoids can also be augmented by their subordinate relationship to an overlord, whether a magic-user or an outer-planes creature such as a barghest. Other monsters, such as beholders, liches, and dragons, are sometimes found as overlords to humanoid tribes.

Fifth, humanoids are no more sacred in their statistics than giants. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a hobgoblin with 7 HD — although you ought to figure out some reason why he rose so high. There is nothing wrong with a tribe of Oriental humanoids versed in martial arts or using *ki* powers. Half-orcs that resemble their orcish parents could be found in positions of leadership in an orc tribe. Humanoid cavalry mounted on giant lizards, harpies, and even dinosaurs (as well as the conventional worgs) is in order.

And finally, don't forget that finest of humanoid pleasures: poison. Large doses of poison in a campaign are generally considered unfair, since too many "zap — you're dead!" situations are a poor means of evening the odds with the high-level players. On the other hand, blade venom should be the forte of humanoids. Making poisoned arrows and blades more common is one means of increasing PC respect for the poor humanoids.

### Conclusion

Giants and humanoids can remain challenging opponents throughout a PC's life. The problem is not with the monsters themselves, but with Dungeon Masters being unable to use them in more sophisticated manners. As long as we rely on more aspects of these monsters than their hit dice and numbers, we can keep using them over and over again — and never run out of excitement. Ω

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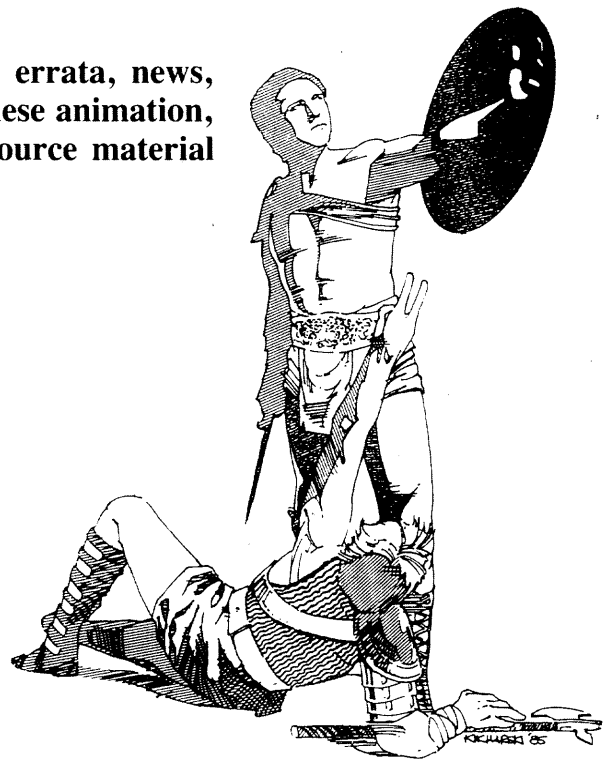
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by Joseph Clay

# Hey, Wanna' Be a Kobold?

## *Humanoids as player characters in AD&D® games*

---

*The following material is highly variant, but gamers may use it to start an alternate campaign in which the bad guys get a little glory for a change. If these rules are not adopted for PCs, a DM may wish to use them for creating extraordinary NPCs (perhaps even populating an isolated area of the world with "super humanoids" for the PCs to fight. Note that the D&D® Gazetteer GAZ 10 The Orcs of Thar (released in December) contains a humanoid character-generating system as well, though this article does not mesh with that or with other material on humanoids in this magazine issue.*

---

Exceptional humanoids are rare and distinct from the other members of their respective races. Such special beings could conceivably enjoy limited level advancement, and a person playing a humanoid character would have a unique role-playing challenge. Some people would like the chance to be a rustic and downright disgusting orc after role-playing one too many noble elves. Other maverick role-players may similarly want to play a diminutive yet lethal kobold, breaking out of the mold of the average, easily slain humanoid. It is for these people that the following guidelines for humanoid PCs were created.

### **The pecking order**

To get the proper feel for role-playing humanoids, one must first understand their motivations. Humanoid society is usually formed into tribal hierarchies with the strongest members in control. This type of organization is also found in wild animal populations and is often referred to as the "pecking order!" In groups of predat-

tory animals like wolves or lions, the rivalry of the pecking order establishes the most physically powerful male as the master of all he surveys. This mastery allows the strongest male to have his first choice of a mate, food, and all else he desires. The leading male also has great responsibilities in the hunt and in the protection of his group. In humanoid societies, the pecking order works in much the same way; in both cases, the group is there for the protection of its individual members over all other outside influences. Humanoids take this reasoning a step further so that all other outside influences must be eliminated, controlled, or used for group or individual benefit. Most humanoids fervently believe that the only way to get something in life is to take it by force.

Humanoids of all races will not be adverse to joining forces in order to attack common enemies; however, each race is aware that when the battle is done, there should only be one race to claim the spoils. Most of the time, different humanoid

tribes war against each other for food and slaves. This intertribal and interracial warfare is imbedded in their religions and in their minds. The warring weeds out the weak and gives the survivors power and glory, thus establishing the pecking order on a large scale. Exceptional humanoids that become adventurers are a result of this weeding process, and are nearly always driven by the same competitiveness their tribes possess.

### **Notes on the tables**

This article provides several tables to help DMs and players determine the various aspects of humanoid PCs. Tables 1-3 provide minimum and maximum attributes, the number of dice used to determine these attributes, and any applicable modifications made to the rolls. These figures are determined by race, which is reflected in the focus of each table. These tables are based on Character Race Table III: Ability Score Minimums & Maximums, on page 15 of the *Players Handbook*.

Tables 4-6 provide character-class level limitations. These limits are determined by race, as illustrated in the focus of each table. Tables 4-6 are similar to Character Race Table II: Class Level Limitations, on page 14 of the *Players Handbook*.

Tables 7 and 8 provide racial adjustments for humanoid thief and thief-acrobat abilities, respectively. These tables are derived from the Racial Adjustments sections of the Thief Function Table on page 28 of the *Players Handbook*, and the Thief-Acrobat Function Table on page 24 of *Unearthed Arcana*.

Table 9 is a new table; it lists a number of physical abnormalities for humanoid PCs which are described in the following section. Table 10 lists starting ages for each of the humanoid races (as in the Non-Human Characters Table on page 12 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*). Table 11 shows the various age categories for each humanoid race (as in the Age Categories table on page 13 of the *DMG*).

Table 12 is the Shaman Experience table; it provides the experience points, levels, titles, and numbers of hit dice for this spell-casting class. Spells for this class are listed in Table 13. Table 14 (like Table 12) lists experience information for the witch doctor character class. Spells available to this class appear in Table 15. These tables are similar to those provided in the *Players Handbook* for the other character classes.

### **Physical abnormalities**

In some humanoid societies, physical abnormalities are a fact of life. Abnormalities run from unfortunate deformities to useful new abilities. Exceptional humanoids are distinct from regular humanoids because they are so often remarkably abnormal, even for humanoids. Physical abnormalities are determined randomly by rolling twice on Table 9. These abnormalities are detailed as follows:

**Abnormally tall:** Height is increased by 1-2', weight by 20-40 lbs., and strength by 1 point. If height is increased past 7' tall, the humanoid is considered to be in the larger-than-man-size category for weapon damage.

**Color blind:** Certain colors cannot be distinguished and will appear uniformly gray, at the DM's discretion.

**Disgusting habit:** This causes a penalty of -2 to charisma and comeliness. Possible bad habits could include great uncleanness, slobbering, belching, or worse (player's choice).

**Disproportionate arms:** Increase strength by 1 point, but only with respect to the use of hands, arms, and shoulders. This extra point of strength may be used for wielding hand weapons, pummeling, and grappling. In addition, increase the chance of successful climbing by 5%.

**Dumb:** The humanoid may be dumb, but not stupid. Reroll intelligence and wisdom scores using 1d4 +4.

**Furry/hairy:** The humanoid is covered in heavy growths of fur. Improve natural armor class by 1 point and give +1 to saving throws vs. cold damage.

**Heightened smell:** The sense of smell is highly acute, allowing the humanoids to distinguish hundreds of different people by scent alone. Surprise rolls are granted +1 in favor of an individual with this ability. Tracking by scent can be done on a 20% chance.

**Homing instinct:** With this ability, a lost humanoid can always make a straight-line path to his home ground (if he is on the same world as his home).

**Insanity:** Roll for the type of insanity on page 83 of the *DMG*. It is suggested that insanity should be a type that might improve role-playing rather than one of the more serious, uncontrollable, disruptive forms (like suicidal mania, etc.). [See "Methods to Your Madness," in *DRAGON*® issue #138, for playable types of character insanity.]

**Iron stomach:** An iron stomach-allows the owner to eat bad food, carrion, rats, rot grubs, or anything that might be remotely edible with no ill effects. Saving throws vs. ingested poison are at +4; if no saving throw is normally possible, the humanoid gains a saving throw of 16, adjusted by other applicable bonuses from magical items.

**Keen hearing:** The humanoid has an 80% chance to hear noise, with a 20% chance in the worst conditions.

**Oversized claws:** The humanoid can make regular claw attacks, doing 1-4 hp per clawed hand (two such attacks per round) plus bonuses for strength.

**Oversized teeth:** The humanoid can bite for 1-4 hp damage (normally, humanoid bites only do 1 hp damage).

**Psionics:** This rare humanoid is psionically endowed and must roll for psionic ability, powers, and disciplines, as per the *Players Handbook*, pages 110-117.

**Stupid:** Reroll intelligence and wisdom

**Table 1**  
**Orc Attributes**

| Attribute    | Min. | Max.  | Dice | Mod. |
|--------------|------|-------|------|------|
| Strength     | 8    | 18/00 | 3d6  | +1   |
| Intelligence | 2    | 16    | 2d8  | -    |
| Wisdom       | 2    | 16    | 2d8  | -    |
| Dexterity    | 2    | 17    | 3d6  | -1   |
| Constitution | 10   | 19    | 3d6  | +1   |
| Charisma*    | 2    | 16    | 2d8  | -    |
| Comeliness*  | 2    | 12    | 2d6  | -    |

\* Add +2 to the given charisma when dealing with orcs from the PC's own tribe.

**Table 2**  
**Goblin Attributes**

| Attribute    | Min. | Max.  | Dice | Mod. |
|--------------|------|-------|------|------|
| Strength     | 3    | 18/75 | 3d6  | -    |
| Intelligence | 3    | 17    | 3d6  | -    |
| Wisdom       | 2    | 16    | 2d8  | -    |
| Dexterity    | 3    | 18    | 3d6  | -    |
| Constitution | 8    | 17    | 3d6  | -1   |
| Charisma*    | 2    | 16    | 2d8  | -    |
| Comeliness*  | 2    | 8     | 2d4  | -    |

\* Add +2 to the given charisma when dealing with goblins from the PC's own tribe.

**Table 3**  
**Kobold and Xvart Attributes**

| Attribute    | Min. | Max. | Dice | Mod. |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|
| Strength     | 3    | 15   | 3d6  | -1   |
| Intelligence | 2    | 16   | 2d8  | -    |
| Wisdom       | 2    | 16   | 2d8  | -    |
| Dexterity    | 3    | 18   | 3d6  | -    |
| Constitution | 2    | 16   | 2d8  | -    |
| Charisma*    | 2    | 16   | 2d8  | -    |
| Comeliness*  | 2    | 8    | 2d4  | -    |

\* Add double the PC's experience level to charisma when dealing with humanoids from his own tribe.

**Table 4**  
**Class Level Limitations (Orc)**

| Ability score | Shaman | Fighter | Magic-user | Thief | Assassin |
|---------------|--------|---------|------------|-------|----------|
| 15            | 5      | 2       | 4          | 7     | 12       |
| 16            | 6      | 3       | 4          | 8     | 12       |
| 17            | 7      | 3       | 4          | 9     | 12       |
| 18            | 8      | 4       | 4          | 9     | 12       |
| 18/99         | -      | 5       | -          | -     | -        |
| 18/00         | -      | 5       | -          | -     | -        |
| 19            | 10     | 6       | 5          | 10    | 13       |
| 20            | 11     | 8       | 6          | 10    | 14       |
| 21            | 11     | 12      | 6          | 10    | 14       |



scores using 1d4 + 1. Although not particularly bright, the humanoid with this affliction can be single-mindedly tenacious. The humanoid can continue to fight for 1-4 melee rounds after reaching zero through - 6 hp before being killed. At - 7 hp or more, death is immediate.

*Sensitive skin:* In direct sunlight, the humanoid with this affliction suffers 2 hp damage per hour from burns.

*Thick cranium:* The humanoid with this enlarged forehead can use it as a large, hard object when pummeling (*Unearthed Arcana*, page 107). Subtract 1 point of intelligence.

*Tougher hide:* Subtract 2 from the natural armor class of the humanoid.

*Ugly:* Reroll comeliness using 1d6 + 2, and subtract 1 point from charisma (maximum score of 10 allowed).

*Ugly (very):* Reroll charisma using 1d10 -8, and subtract 3 points from charisma (maximum score of 8 allowed).

*Ugly (extremely):* Reroll comeliness using 2d6 -20, and subtract 5 points from charisma (maximum score of 6 allowed, with no minimum score). If two "Ugly" results are rolled, the charisma effects are cumulative and the lowest possible comeliness score using either result is adopted. Anyone who sees a humanoid with charisma and comeliness scores of negative values must make a saving throw vs. spells or be affected as if by a *fear* spell. It is obvious that such a humanoid must keep his face covered when he is not in private.

**Table 5**

**Class Level Limitations (Goblin)**

| Ability score | Shaman | Fighter | Magic-user | Thief | Assassin |
|---------------|--------|---------|------------|-------|----------|
| 15            | 7      | 2       | 4          | 9     | 11       |
| 16            | 8      | 2       | 4          | 10    | 12       |
| 17            | 9      | 3       | 4          | 11    | 12       |
| 18            | 10     | 4       | 5          | 11    | 13       |
| 18/99         | -      | 4       | -          | -     | -        |
| 18/00         | -      | 5       | -          | -     | -        |
| 19            | 11     | 6       | 6          | 11    | 14       |
| 20            | 11     | 8       | 7          | 12    | 14       |
| 21            | 11     | 9       | 8          | 12    | 14       |

**Table 6**

**Class Level Limitations (Kobolds/Xvarts)**

| Ability score | Shaman | Fighter | Magic-user | Thief | Assassin |
|---------------|--------|---------|------------|-------|----------|
| 15            | 5      | 2       | 2          | 10    | 10       |
| 16            | 6      | 2       | 2          | 11    | 10       |
| 17            | 7      | 2       | 3          | 12    | 11       |
| 18            | 8      | 2       | 4          | 12    | 11       |
| 18/50         | -      | 3       | -          | -     | -        |
| 18/75         | -      | 4       | -          | -     | -        |
| 18/99         | -      | 5       | -          | -     | -        |
| 19            | 10     | 6       | 5          | 12    | 12       |
| 20            | 10     | 6       | 6          | 12    | 12       |
| 21            | 10     | 7       | 8          | 12    | 12       |

### Starting money

For the sake of simplicity, all humanoids can be given the starting money normally allowed to their prospective classes. But if a DM wishes to create a more challenging dilemma for starting humanoids, he may equip each of them with any three of the following useful groups of things instead (player's choice): any one weapon; one suit of ring mail, studded leather, or leather armor; a shield (any size); one week's food and water; a pouch with 2-8 random coins (with thieves picks and tools if the humanoid has thieving abilities); a completely loyal, immature pet (must be a nonmagical mammal having 5 HD or less when full grown); a wooden holy symbol (for shamans and witch doctors); a crudely made spell book (written on thin wooden sheets or old paper) for witch doctors, with spell components for 2d10 castings; one set of very warm furs, a hat, boots, and gloves; 1-4 one-gallon jugs of highly volatile drinking grog; 1-2 flasks of oil; one flask of a randomly determined poison (DM's decision as to potency, effects, and use). Moth-eaten or dirty old garments are free for starting humanoids. The DM must remind the humanoid that he comes from a technologically backwards, if not impoverished

**Table 7**

**Racial Adjustments for Thieves**

| Race of the thief | Pick pockets | Open locks | Find/remove traps | Move silently | Hide in shadows | Hear noise | Climb walls | Read languages |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| Orc               | - 5 %        | +5%        | +15%              | -             | -               | +5%        | +10%        | -20%           |
| Goblin            | +5%          | +5%        | +5%               | -             | +5%             | +5%        | -           | -10%           |
| Kobold            | +5%          | +5%        | +5%               | +10%          | +15%            | +5%        | -15%        | -10%           |
| Xvart             | -            | +5%        | +5%               | +10%          | +15%            | +5%        | -15%        | -5%            |

**Table 8**

**Racial Adjustments for Thief-Acrobats**

| Race of acrobat | Tightrope | Pole     | High    | Broad jumping: |         | Tumbling maneuvers: |         |         |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------|
|                 | walking   | vaulting | jumping | standing       | running | attack              | evasion | falling |
| Goblin          | -         | -2'      | -1'     | -1½'           | -2'     | +5%                 | +10%    | -       |
| Kobold          | -         | -2'      | -1'     | -2'            | -2'     | -                   | +10%    | +5%     |
| Xvart           | -         | -2'      | -1'     | -2'            | -2'     | -                   | +10%    | +5%     |

ished, tribal situation; even shoes or boots are rarely available.

Character race descriptions

Orcs

Exceptional orcs may be fighters, shamans, magic-users, thieves, or assassins. Orcs may be multiclassed as witch doctors, fighter/assassins, or shaman/thieves. Orcs have a natural armor class of 10, modified by dexterity and armor. In addition to their own language, orcs speak Goblin, Hobgoblin, Ogrish, and a crude form of Common. They also speak their alignment language but can learn no additional languages. Orcs pick up most obscene and slang words and phrases if exposed to a given language for more than one week's time.

Orcs have infravision to a 6" range; in bright light, they take a penalty of - 1 on "to hit" rolls and saving throws. Orcs have a base movement rate of 12") an average weight of 170 +2d12 lbs., and an average height of 66 +4d4" (about 6'). All orcs have excellent mining skills, and exceptional orcs have a 35% chance to detect grade, slope, new construction, sliding walls, traps, and depth underground. Many orcs have the ability to construct large engines of destruction, such as catapults, battering rams, etc.; some orcs have extra proficiency in the use of one specific siege-engine type, receiving a + 1 bonus on "to hit" rolls. A few know how to train elephantine creatures as war mounts. Orcs can handle any hand-held weapons that humans can handle.

Orcs hate elves and their ilk, and will generally attack them before attacking any other creature. Exceptional orcs will tolerate elves as long as there is no impertinence. This balanced tolerance rarely prevents an orc from using harmless but vulgar puns which the orc regards as high sarcasm. All orcs are rude, crude, and have bad manners, especially when fighting and eating. Attempts at teaching an orc complex tasks sometimes result in vaguely acceptable behavior, although this is usually perverted into unintentional parodies of the desired goal.

Goblins

Goblins may be fighters, shamans, magic-users, thieves, assassins, or thief-acrobats. They may be multiclassed as witch doctors, fighter/shamans, fighter/thieves, fighter/witch doctors, and shaman/thieves.

Goblins have a natural armor class of 10, modified by dexterity and armor type. In addition to their own language, goblins also speak Hobgoblin, Kobold, Orcish, and a stilted form of Common. They also speak their alignment language and a maximum of one other language, regardless of intelligence. A goblin can call off attacks from wolves, worgs, and most dogs if he rolls his charisma or less on 1d20, with a + 2 bonus.

Goblins have infravision to a 6" range. In bright light, goblins take a penalty of - 1 on "to hit" rolls and on saving throws. Goblins have a base movement rate of 6") an average weight of 70 +2d10 lbs., and an average height of 43 + 2d4". Goblins have fair mining skills, with a 25% chance to detect grade, slope, new construction, sliding walls, traps, and depth underground. When attacked by larger-than-man-size creatures, goblin characters subtract 1 from their opponents "to hit" rolls because of the relative speed and small size of goblins.

Goblins hate gnomes and dwarves, and will generally attack them before attacking any other creature. Exceptional goblins might rein-in their racial hatreds in order to benefit from mutual cooperation, but this does not keep them from subterfuge, manipulation, or worse at a later date. Goblins of all alignments can have henchmen, but evil goblins will literally enslave their followers.

Kobolds and xvarts

Kobolds and their blue-skinned cousins may become fighters, shamans, magic-users, thieves, assassins, or thief-acrobats. They may be multiclassed as witch doctors, fighter/shamans, fighter/magic-users, fighter/witch doctors, fighter/thieves,

Table 9  
Physical Abnormalities

|       | Abnormality           |
|-------|-----------------------|
| 1d100 |                       |
| 01-02 | Abnormally tall       |
| 03-06 | Color blind           |
| 07-10 | Disgusting habit      |
| 11-12 | Disproportionate arms |
| 13-16 | Dumb                  |
| 17-20 | Furry/hairy           |
| 21-22 | Heightened smell      |
| 23-25 | Homing instinct       |
| 26-27 | Infravision           |
| 28-30 | Insanity              |
| 31-34 | Iron stomach          |
| 35-36 | Keen hearing          |
| 37-38 | Oversized claws       |
| 39-42 | Oversized teeth       |
| 43    | Psionic               |
| 44-45 | Stupid                |
| 46-49 | Sun-sensitive skin    |
| 50-51 | Thick cranium         |
| 52-53 | Tough hide            |
| 54-59 | Ugly                  |
| 60-64 | Ugly (very)           |
| 65-66 | Ugly (extremely)      |
| 67-94 | No abnormalities      |
| 95-99 | Roll again twice      |
| 00    | Player's choice       |

Table 10  
Age Categories

| Race         | Young adult | Mature | Middle aged | Old     | Venerable |
|--------------|-------------|--------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Goblin       | 10-12       | 13-25  | 26-35       | 36-50   | 51-65     |
| Kobold/xvart | 20-30       | 31-65  | 66-100      | 101-135 | 136-180   |
| Orc          | 8-10        | 11-20  | 21-30       | 31-40   | 41-55     |

Table 11  
Humanoid Starting Age

| Race         | Cleric   | Fighter  | Magic-user | Thief    |
|--------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| Goblin       | 9+1d4    | 9+1d4    | 13 + 1d8   | 9+1d4    |
| Kobold/xvart | 28 + 1d4 | 20 + 1d4 | 37 + 2d12  | 26 + 1d4 |
| Orc          | 7+1d4    | 7+1d4    | 11 + 1d6   | 7+1d4    |

Table 12  
Shaman Experience Table

| Experience points | Experience level | 8-sided dice for accumulated hit points | Level title    |
|-------------------|------------------|---|----------------|
| 0-2,000           | 1                | 2                                       | Minor shaman   |
| 2,001-4,000       | 2                | 3                                       | Minor shaman   |
| 4,001-8,000       | 3                | 4                                       | Minor shaman   |
| 8,001-17,500      | 4                | 5                                       | Shaman         |
| 17,501-35,000     | 5                | 6                                       | Shaman         |
| 35,001-70,000     | 6                | 7                                       | Shaman         |
| 70,001-140,000    | 7                | 8                                       | Shaman priest  |
| 140,001-285,000   | 8                | 9                                       | Shaman priest  |
| 285,001-570,000   | 9                | 10                                      | Shaman priest  |
| 570,001-845,000   | 10               | 10+2                                    | Greater shaman |
| 845,001+          | 11               | 10+4                                    | Greater shaman |



fighter/assassins, shaman/thieves, shaman/assassins, magic-user/thieves, or witch doctor/thieves.

Kobolds speak their own language, Goblin, and Orcish; xvarts know their own tongue, Kobold, and Goblin. These two races also speak their alignment languages and a maximum of one more language. Kobolds can deal with wild boars and giant weasels as goblins do large canines, and xvarts deal with all rats and bats in a similar fashion.

Kobolds and xvarts have infravision out to a 6" range; in bright light, they take a penalty of -1 on "to hit" rolls and on saving throws. Their base movement rate is 6") average weight is 34 + 2d6 lbs., and average height is 31+ 2d8". Kobolds have a natural armor class of 8 and xvarts of 10, with modifications for armor worn and dexterity. When being attacked by larger-than-man-size creatures, these beings subtract 1 from their opponents "to hit" rolls because of the size differential.

Normal kobolds and xvarts almost always live in large war bands which makes up for their individual small sizes. Exceptional kobolds and xvarts compensate for their smallness by the use of cunning tactics, common sense, and raw skill; still, they realize that safety lies in num-

bers and will always retain good standing within one or more tribes. Each such humanoid therefore finds it advantageous to increase the size and might of his tribe, indirectly gaining more prestige and personal power. For example, by seeking to improve tribal ironworking techniques, the exceptional kobold benefits, as his tribe can create better weapons and armor of higher protective value. These smallest beings must look after each other in order to survive annihilation by their numerous enemies. To reflect this tribal orientation, an exceptional kobold or xuart adds double his level of experience to his charisma score to get the charisma effect when dealing with humanoids of his own tribe.

Since so many assorted creatures attack them, kobolds have become clever haters, particularly despising the likes of brownies, pixies, sprites, and gnomes. Exceptional kobolds tolerate the more powerful gnomes only if they can ignore them. Any conversation with these races is terse and to the point. By contrast, xvarts seem to hate everyone equally.

#### The shaman

The shaman is a primitive subclass of the cleric. A character must have a mini-

mum wisdom ability score of 9 to be a shaman; if wisdom is greater than 15, the character adds 10% to the experience points awarded to him by the referee. A shaman PC also gains bonus spells from high wisdom.

The shaman is dedicated to a deity and urges his tribe to worship that god. The shaman's alignment is that of his deity, and he uses the weapon and armor types used by that deity and by his own tribe.

PC shamans are limited to the casting of certain spells; these are listed hereafter. Shamans have the same number of spells usable per level as clerics, using these spells to protect the welfare of their tribes. Shamans may additionally use clerical scrolls with spells other than those on the shamans' spell table.

Shamans use the cleric's fighting and saving-throw tables. All saving throws vs. disease and poison are made at +2, due to the hardy lifestyle of the shaman.

The shaman character has some of the primary abilities of the barbarian class. These primary abilities are: **hide in natural surroundings, surprise, and leadership.** The shaman also has the following barbarian-class secondary abilities: **survival, first aid, outdoor craft, and tracking.**

Exceptional humanoid shamans also have sage knowledge, having two to four special categories within the major field of study. The major field of study will, of course, always be "Humanoids and Giantkind." Shamans can read and write any language they can speak with a 5% chance of success per intelligence point.

Humanoid shamans of 9th level can concoct poison as assassins can. Scrolls may be inscribed by shamans of 7th level only if the shamans can use the spells they inscribe.

If and when a humanoid shaman achieves 8th level, he automatically attracts humanoid followers if he establishes a place of worship. These humanoid followers are fanatically loyal and serve without pay as long as the shaman does not change deities or alignment. The number of humanoid followers is the same as the "Number Appearing" statistic found in the **Monster Manual** under the appropriate humanoid type. In addition, there will be subleaders of the appropriate type and 4-20 temple guards (normal humanoids with maximum hit points). For each advance in level beyond the 8th, the shaman gains 2-20 additional humanoid followers. The shaman may also build a castle or some type of fortified temple upon reaching 9th level, as would a normal cleric.

#### The tribal magic-user

The tribal magic-user is the same as a regular magic-user, except that spell lists are more limited for magicians in such rustic situations. The spells of tribal magic-users are engraved into poor-quality paper or wooden tablets because the expensive parchment required to make a proper

**Table 13**  
**Shaman Spells**

| Number | 1st level                    | 2nd level                              |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
| 1      | <i>Ceremony</i>              | <i>Augury</i>                          |
| 2      | <i>Cure light wounds</i>     | <i>Chant</i>                           |
| 3      | <i>Detect evil</i>           | <i>Detect charm,</i>                   |
| 4      | <i>Detect magic</i>          | <i>Detect life</i>                     |
| 5      | <i>Light</i>                 | <i>Holy symbol</i>                     |
| 6      | <i>Portent</i>               | <i>Resist fire</i>                     |
| 7      | <i>Protection from evil</i>  | <i>Snake charm</i>                     |
| 8      | <i>Resist fear</i>           | <i>Speak with animals</i>              |
| Number | 3rd level                    | 4th level                              |
| 1      | <i>Cure blindness</i>        | <i>Abjure</i>                          |
| 2      | <i>Cure disease</i>          | <i>Control temperature 10' radius*</i> |
| 3      | <i>Death's door</i>          | <i>Divination</i>                      |
| 4      | <i>Dispel magic</i>          | <i>Exorcise</i>                        |
| 5      | <i>Flame walk</i>            | <i>Neutralize poison</i>               |
| 6      | <i>Locate object</i>         | <i>Produce fire*</i>                   |
| 7      | <i>Prayer</i>                | <i>Spell immunity</i>                  |
| 8      | <i>Remove curse</i>          | <i>Tongues</i>                         |
| Number | 5th Level                    | 6th Level                              |
| 1      | <i>Animate dead monsters</i> | <i>Animate object</i>                  |
| 2      | <i>Atonement</i>             | <i>Conjure animals</i>                 |
| 3      | <i>Commune</i>               | <i>Find the path</i>                   |
| 4      | <i>Control winds*</i>        | <i>Forbiddance</i>                     |
| 5      | <i>Cure critical wounds</i>  | <i>Heal</i>                            |
| 6      | <i>Dispel magic</i>          | <i>Speak with monsters</i>             |
| 7      | <i>Quest</i>                 | <i>Stone tell</i>                      |
| 8      | <i>True seeing</i>           | <i>Weather summoning*</i>              |

\* As the druidic spell of the same level.

spell book is beyond the technological capabilities of most humanoid tribes. These spell "books" are bulky, having an encumbrance value of 10 gp per spell level for wooden tablets and 3 gp per spell level for paper books.

Humanoid magic-users and witch doctors are initially limited in magic-user spells, but they may attempt to learn and use other magic-user spells if such are accessible. The spells must be provided by the very few human or demi-human magic-users who are willing to trade with humanoids (or are forced to do so). Since the providing magic-user runs the risk of being labeled as a traitor (or worse), he will certainly charge many times the formal fee for such services. Exceptional magic-users and witch doctors all begin with the spells read *magic* and write, with 1-3 other spells as well.

Wooden or parchment scrolls may be inscribed by 7th- or higher-level tribal spell-casters, so long as the spells involved are on their allowed spells lists.

#### The witch doctor

Witch doctors are a special form of multiclassed magic-user/shaman open only

to humanoids. The witch doctor differs from other multiclassed **because a six-sided die per level is used to determine hit points.** Witch doctors have all the abilities and level limitations of shamans.

The ability to learn and memorize magic-user spells is restricted by the level limitations of the tribal magic-user class, even though the witch doctor can achieve higher levels.

In addition to the special abilities of shamans, witch doctors **have other skills.** At 3rd level, witch doctors can brew crude alcoholic beverages. At 5th level, the following spells can be brewed as potions: *cure blindness*, *cure disease*, *cure light wounds*, *resist fear*, and *resist fire*. *Neutralize poison* and *spell immunity* can be brewed as potions upon attaining 7th level. Also at 7th level, a witch doctor has sufficient alchemical ability with which to construct a homonculous. Note that no aid from an alchemist is required unless the witch doctor wishes to make other potion types.

## Editorial

Continued from page 3

adding a few new faces on the production staff). Nothing remains the same except change. I don't even want to imagine what will happen *this* year.

And finally —

**Allycia & Scud & Waldorf & harpies:** Regretfully, we are not accepting any more letters for "Forum" in which writers point out various ways in which the beautiful elven cavalier Allycia and the scum human fighter Scud can bash each other for the privilege of crossing a bridge. They were first used as examples in a jousting article in issue #118, page 25, and their alternate adventures have dotted the "Forum" since then (we've gotten a half-dozen other letters on them, too). I think we all know in our hearts that Allycia and Scud are in love and are going to get married, so we need no further speculation on their martial (and marital) jousting.

We also have more than enough letters describing ways in which everyone's favorite character lays into Waldorf, the 358th-level magic-user who H-bombed Oerth (issue #138). We may run a few of these later, but believe me, our files are full. We have also turned our backs on the burning issues of whether dwarven women have beards, how harpies reproduce themselves, and the existence of banded-mail armor. This was not done without many hours of intense soul-searching, but we trust we have done the right thing. We must make way for wholly new bizarre topics for 1989, and we are counting on you — our readers — to help chart our course.

From all of us, to all of you: Have a wonderful New Year.



**Table 14**  
**Witch Doctor's Experience Table**

| Experience points | Experience level | 6-sided dice for accumulated hit points | Level title    |
|-------------------|------------------|---|----------------|
| 0-4,500           | 1                | 1                                       | Acolyte        |
| 4,501-9,000       | 2                | 2                                       | Evoker         |
| 9,001-18,000      | 3                | 3                                       | Witch-Conjurer |
| 18,001-39,500     | 4                | 4                                       | Bewitcher      |
| 39,501-75,000     | 5                | 5                                       | Witch-Brewer   |
| 75,001-130,000    | 6                | 6                                       | Witch-Brewer   |
| 130,001-230,000   | 7                | 7                                       | Witch-Brewer   |
| 230,001-420,000   | 8                | 8                                       | Witch Doctor   |
| 420,001-820,000   | 9                | 9                                       | Witch Doctor   |
| 820,001-1,220,000 | 10               | 9+2                                     | Witch Doctor   |
| 1,220,001+        | 11               | 9+4                                     | Witch Doctor   |

Witch doctors gain magic-user and clerical spells of the appropriate levels; when the maximum spell-use level for one class is reached, spell progression continues for the other class only.

**Table 15**  
**Tribal Magic-user and Witch Doctor Spells**

| Number | 1st level                  | 2nd level                  | 3rd level                              | 4th level               |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 1      | <i>Affect normal fires</i> | <i>Audible glamor</i>      | <i>Clairaudience</i>                   | <i>Dig</i>              |
| 2      | <i>Dancing lights</i>      | <i>Bind</i>                | <i>Clairvoyance</i>                    | <i>Enchanted weapon</i> |
| 3      | <i>Identify</i>            | <i>Detect invisibility</i> | <i>Defect illusion</i>                 | <i>Fear</i>             |
| 4      | <i>Jump</i>                | <i>Invisibility</i>        | <i>Dispel magic</i>                    | <i>Plant growth</i>     |
| 5      | <i>Mending</i>             | <i>Levitate</i>            | <i>Flame arrow</i>                     | <i>Polymorph other</i>  |
| 6      | <i>Push</i>                | <i>Magic mouth</i>         | <i>Haste</i>                           | <i>Polymorph self</i>   |
| 7      | <i>Run</i>                 | <i>Mirror image</i>        | <i>Invisibility 10' radius</i>         | <i>Remove curse</i>     |
| 8      | <i>Shield</i>              | <i>Preserve</i>            | <i>Material</i>                        | <i>Ultra vision</i>     |
| 9      | <i>Taunt</i>               | <i>Scare</i>               | <i>Protection from normal missiles</i> | <i>Stoneskin</i>        |
| 10     | <i>Ventriloquism</i>       | <i>Shatter</i>             | <i>Slow</i>                            | <i>Wizard eye</i>       |





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ystals of frozen breath clung to the fur that lined the hood of Anrad Snorrison's cloak. Wind beat against his face, and the tears it drove from his eyes hardened to ice on his cheeks. Swiftly, the rhythmical zigzag of his skis passed miles beneath him, but the

bleak, white landscape never changed. He longed for the shelter the pines had provided scarcely half a day earlier. Now, the forest dwindled to a thin black line behind him, separating the snowfields from the cloudless sky.

Anrad knew venturing this close to Jotunheim was dangerous. In a winter so severe the elders claimed it as the first of three that would herald the battle of Ragnarok at the end of the world, his journey seemed sure suicide. Still, Anrad had not been offered a choice. He harbored little love for his father, but Snorri Hardhand was a chief and a great warrior, and he should not have to die in a sickbed. So, the village priest ordered Anrad to leave his father's side and seek the Ulfjarl's stone. Legends claimed its reading would bring new strength to the chieftain.

The ground trembled as a distant glacier marched toward the sea. Anrad felt its movement through feet that had grown wooden from cold. He longed to turn back and surrender to the smoky warmth of the longhouse. But if Anrad returned without finding and reading the runic stone he sought, he would prove himself a coward and condemn his father's soul to Hel, the final rest for men who died ravaged by illness rather than the glories of war.

As a youth, Anrad recalled his mother's tears while he hid behind a thick beam. His father paced angrily. "You make my son into a milksop. He must learn of Odin and the warrior's skill of *klima* as well as the White Christ and books. To control the stallions that wander my fief, his hands must be strong enough to hold their reins. You make him a weakling." His mother had struck his father a ringing blow across the face and ran from the room. His father's voice chased her. "Teach him that, and I'll be pleased."

Anrad sniffed the air, and the cold slid mucus down his throat. Blood filled his hairless cheeks. *I'll not give my father the satisfaction of proving me a coward. I'll read the runic stone, or I'll not return.*

Anrad's pack of provisions, axe, and bow weighed heavily on him. His fingertips burned, and his elk hide mittens stiffened from the cold. The sun paused, half-hidden by the blank vista that stretched before him. This night would lay long and bitter across the land. He was ill-provisioned for a night on the open ice.

Anrad set his axe and bow on the ice and slid the pack from his shoulder. Its leather flap broke free in his hand. Swearing, he groped through his hard mittens to remove the tent. Despite his efforts, the bundle of sealskin remained frozen to the pack. Anrad had never gone viking or traveled far from his father's garth, but he knew he could not survive the night without his tent and the lantern secured beneath it. *I won't allow myself to die in an attempt to save my father's worthless life.* In frustration, he thrashed the pack until he stood, panting, and sweat stung his eyes.

The warmth wrestling with the pack produced quickly

# The Ulfjarl's Stone

by Mickey Zucker Reichert

Illustrations by Janet Aulisio

gave way to cold. With his woolen underclothing damp, Anrad knew he must find shelter soon or perish. Bitterness welled within him. He pressed his face into the palms of his mittens and cried. *Father was right. Anrad Snorrison is a craven.* He squeezed his hands against his eyes to force back the tears. The rigid leather raked his skin, and a frozen thong from the seam cut his cheek. He jerked his hands away. A drop of blood fell to the snow.

Anrad removed one of his mittens and reached through the cool dampness of his cloak. He grasped the knife at his belt and drew it from its sheath. Wind and particles of ice bit mercilessly into his bare hand while he studied the long, black blade. *There are quicker ways to die than freezing.* He reversed his grip on the knife and stood, motionless, watching a pale splotch of frostbite spread across his thumb.

A gust of wind struck Anrad from behind and drove him a step forward. His ski caught on the pack. He fell, driving his uncovered hand deep into the snow. The crust clawed at the frozen skin of his knuckles. The knife slid from his grip. Screaming with pain, he wrenched his hand from the snow, thrust it beneath his heavy robe, and forced it inside his breeks.

The warmth of his crotch brought new pain to his fingers. As he rolled helplessly in the snow, his skis seemed like shackles on his feet. Cruelly, the handle of the knife pressed into his cheek. Above the blade, the dark form of his pack loomed defiantly.

Anrad struggled with his mittened hand to push himself to his feet. His muscles responded sluggishly. The bitter metal of the knife clung to his face and peeled away painfully as he rose. He stood, hunched forward and teetering in the wind. He reached for the knife. His stiff mit closed around its handle. Maddeningly, it fumbled in his grasp; but he managed to saw through the thongs that bound his feet to the skis and stagger onto the snow. The crust held beneath his weight, and he collapsed beside his axe.

Wearily, Anrad raised his knife and hacked at the rawhide lacings which closed the seams of his pack. He trembled from the cold as death drew nearer. Suddenly, panic seized him, and he flailed wildly with the blade. Chunks of rawhide fell away, but most of the pack clung tenaciously to its contents. He clawed at the mangled pack with both hands. One of the sides pulled free. He pried his tent loose and unrolled the stiff sealskin on the ice.

The cold conquered Anrad's mind as well as his body. He felt no joy or triumph as he lifted the lantern filled with frozen fat from his shredded pack, crawled across his axe and bow, and slithered between the layers of sealskin. Mechanically, he drew a fist-sized piece of flint from the pouch at his belt and struck it with the spine of his knife. The sparks alighted in the fat and died, unable to ignite the protruding cloth wick.

The drowsiness that crept into Anrad's mind seemed his only reality. Without the heat the lantern could provide, he harbored little hope of living through the night. As the cold numbed his remaining senses, thoughts of sleep replaced those of survival. The cold would disappear once he closed his eyes. He could light the lantern tomorrow. Anrad curled into a ball and surrendered to the chill darkness of the arctic night.

The haze of dream stirred through Anrad's mind. Disembodied, he watched as a great assemblage of Norsemen shouted down a speaker. Strong men with tangled manes of greasy, blond hair crashed swords against their shields. The women spat at the man before the crowd and turned away while children gathered stones. Revulsion at the crowd's treatment of the speaker shook Anrad. He drifted closer to the young man being harried by the crowd.

As Anrad approached, he recognized the speaker's tear-streaked face as his own. Gradually, the buildings and faces among the crowd became familiar. He entered the body that stood impotently before the mob. Anger, fear, and vulnerability wrenched at his soul. This was the gathering to hail him chief after his father's death, but his people would not have him. His spirit and his dream body both wept.

A stone from the crowd crashed against Anrad's side. Growling epithets, the armed men pressed forward and swept him from his feet. They tossed him about like a rag doll in the hands of an enraged child.

A sharp pain cut through Anrad's dream. Dizziness seized him as he tumbled through the air. He struck the ground with a bone jarring impact. Snow crunched beneath heavy footfalls. *Only one of the white bears would travel on the open ice!* Anrad jolted awake as realization struck him a blow as savage as the cuff from the polar bear. He recalled stories he had heard as a child. One blow from a bear's paw could shatter a bull seal's skull and hurl the body from the water onto the ice. His father had told of two white bears who fought to the death; neither gave quarter. With most of its head torn away, the winner had crawled away to die.

The white bear snuffled and woofed as it circled Anrad's tent. A warm dampness spread through his breeks. He waited, praying to Christ the bear would leave him unmolested. The footfalls stopped near the edge of Anrad's tent. He wanted to burst through the sealskin and run, screaming, to the safety of his father's garth. But terror held him motionless, except for a trembling not entirely from cold.

Suddenly, the tent snapped taut and thrashed wildly. Anrad rolled from the opening and sprawled in the snow. He stared as the bear towered over him, clutching the tent in its jaws. The sealskins dangled half a man's height from the ground. Effortlessly, the beast shredded the tent.

Anrad ran. His boots broke through the snow's crust. He tripped, slid across the ice, and crashed into the remnants of his camp. His pack and bow spun away, but the axe caught beneath him and jerked him to a stop. The bear charged. Anrad snatched up the axe and fled.

The white bear traveled in an easy lope that belied its speed. Quickly, it closed the distance between them. The will to live tore open fear's grip on Anrad. His heart beat faster. Spinning, he raised his axe to meet the bear. Neither he nor the beast hesitated. The axe crashed into its face. Impact drove the weapon from Anrad's grip, and his world exploded into darkness.

Anrad awoke, warm for the first time since he had left his father's garth two days ago. Each breath came with



great effort. A weight pinned his shoulder to the ice, and he could not roll far enough to free it. His discomfort seemed inconsequential, compensated by the warmth that enveloped him.

Gradually, the thought-dimming blanket of unconsciousness lifted from Anrad's mind. His situation became clear. The single blow from his axe had killed the bear, but the force of its charge carried the vast body forward and trapped Anrad beneath it. *Even after death, the beast is not vanquished.* Anrad held his breath and pushed until the muscles in his arms and legs burned. Hot blood swept his cheeks, and sparks swirled before his eyes. He exhaled, nearer to exhaustion than escape. He could not move the bear.

It might take days for the bear's carcass to freeze, but once it did, Anrad knew his death would follow. No fate could seem bleaker than helplessly awaiting one's own death. For the first time in Anrad's life, he felt sympathy for his father's illness. He thought he understood the desperation that forced Snorri Hardhand to allow the priest to send his only son on this hopeless mission. Any attempt to fight, no matter how feeble, took more courage than surrender.

Anrad braced his feet against the bear and pushed. The carcass remained immovable, but Anrad slid between the bear and the snow. He repositioned his feet and shoved again. Light penetrated the coarse fur that surrounded him. Hope spurred him on. After another push, his head emerged into the blinding pallor of arctic day. Wind stung, his face and brought tears to his eyes. He wondered if survival was worth separating himself from the bear's warmth. A final kick slid him free.

The bear sprawled on the ice before Anrad. Alive, it had stood more than twice as tall as any man. Anrad's axe remained wedged in its skull. Pride for his kill brought an inner warmth and sense of worth he had never known. *Not even Snorri Hardhand can call me, Anrad Bearslayer, a coward!*

To Anrad Bearslayer, finding the Ulfjarl's stone no longer seemed impossible. He cut strips of hide from the bear and fashioned new bindings for his skis. He pried his axe free, lashed the skis to his feet, and set out to complete his quest. No longer burdened by the heavy tent, Anrad traveled swiftly. Miles passed beneath his skis. At length, he came upon a pressure ridge that drew a jagged line of vertical ice across his path. Beyond it, black cliffs loomed above the fiord where the priest had told him to seek the Ulfjarl's stone.

When Anrad neared the ridge, he removed his skis and drew his axe. Methodically, he carved steps into the ice and climbed. As he inched toward the top, he thought of his father. The image of Snorri Hardhand lying in his deathbed stirred feelings of pity, but no love. Anrad could not respect a man who would wager his only son's life on an errand based on foolish superstition.

Anrad mounted the last step and stood atop the ridge. Only a narrow stretch of ice separated him from land. A triangular rock jutted from the ice at the base of the cliffs. *If God or the Norms graced me with luck, I've found the Ulfjarl's stone.*

Anrad retied the bindings on his skis and prepared for the final part of his journey. Anticipation lent strength to his legs.

He glided across the ice to the monolith. A thin film of snow coated the Ulfjarl's stone and obscured the carvings beneath it. He drew his axe and meticulously scraped free every speck of ice before reading its inscription:

*Ulfjarl went a-hunting  
aurochs in the highlands.  
Enemies and chieftains  
with a host surprised him.*

*Mighty Ulfjarl stood alone  
fighting bitter foeman.  
Axe and shield and byrnie  
splintered all around him.*

*Bravely our Ulfjarl died.  
The valkyries attend him.  
It is for his living kin  
to go out and avenge him.*

*Stone cold will our eyes be  
when we refuse the werewolf.  
Brands into their longhouse  
will not soon be forgotten.*

*We tarry carving rune stone  
to make the world remember  
the vengeance of the yeomen  
who loved him as a brother.*



Anrad reread the poem in disbelief. He found no trace of the magic he sought to save his father. The song of Ulfjarl could not help Snorri Hardhand regain his health. Grim understanding seeped into Anrad's mind. *The priest and my father sent me away to die. They never believed a sniveling milksop could find the Ulfjarl's stone.* Frustration, betrayal, and rage writhed within him. *Like Ulfjarl's men, I must avenge myself. And vengeance requires I return to my father's garth.*

The fjord and the pressure ridge quickly disappeared behind Anrad. With the passing miles, his rage dwindled. He knew Snorri Hardhand was a fair man. If Anrad had been a son worthy of his father's attention, the chief could not have helped but love him.

Anrad's shadow stretched before him. After many hours, the remains of his last camp lay scattered before him. A white fox ran from Anrad, dragging the fat-filled lantern across the snow. Without heat from the lantern and with his tent in shreds, he would be forced to travel through the night. He might still die because of his father's hopeless errand. New anger flared.

The sun dropped below the horizon. As Anrad pushed through the night, his thoughts turned from anger to despair to guilt and back to anger. His emotions seemed like a wheel to carry him across the snow and back to his home, its axle a question for his father: *Why did you try to kill me?*

When the first rays of dawn filtered through the pines, the low buildings of Snorri Hardhand's stead squatted in the valley before Anrad. Wisps of smoke curled from the longhouse. The sight rekindled rage that sped Anrad's skis on the familiar trail. He skated toward the hall where his father lay.

When Anrad arrived, the priest pushed open the hide-bound door. Closing the panel behind him, he approached Anrad. Anrad drew his axe and cut the bindings from his skis, the bear's blood still frozen in scarlet rivulets on the blade. Then Anrad met the priest.

A strand of moist, gray hair fell across the priest's wizened face. He started to speak, but Anrad cut him off. "You sent a boy north to die. I froze. I fought one of the great bears. I found your useless stone. I returned." His knuckles whitened around the axe haft. "Take me to my

father before I brush the hair from your eyes and most of your scalp with it."

The old priest turned and strode along a narrow trail toward the forest. "Your father would see you as well." He beckoned Anrad to follow. "You'll have use enough for your axe later."

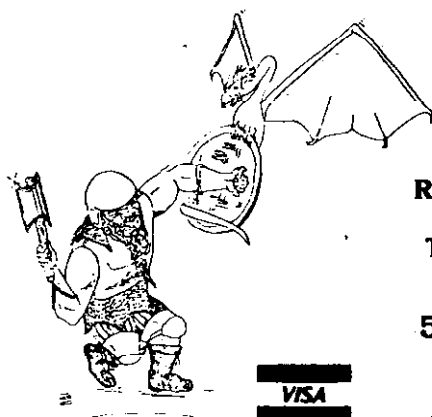
Silently, the priest walked into the forest. Anrad trailed him, confused. His reception was not at all as he imagined it. The priest did not seem surprised at his return. He did not cringe from Anrad's bloody axe nor apologize. *And why did the priest lead me away from the longhouse?* When Anrad had left to seek the Ulfjarl's stone, his father could not sit without assistance. For Snorri Hardhand to walk in the woods, Anrad's quest must have brought success.

Anrad trudged after the priest, in awe of the magic he had worked. He tried to picture the Ulfjarl's stone and understand the eldritch craft that made it more than mere rock and words. Consumed by his own thoughts, he failed to notice the small cabin they approached. The priest stopped by its door.

Anrad stared as the old man pulled two large, triangular pieces of cloth from beneath his cloak. "Hel shoes?" A *condemned soul's only protection from Hel's eternal ice.* He reached for the shoes. "Father died? The stone —"

"Did its job," the priest finished. "Snorri Hardhand forbid anyone other than his son to bind the Hel shoes to his feet. If you never returned from the ice, he would share your fate." The priest continued. "You were right. We sent a boy to die on the ice. He did, and a man returned." The priest dropped to one knee. "And the Ulfjarl's stone made the chieftain strong. Hail Chief Anrad Icewalker!"

Ω



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worlds of exploded suns,  
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# AMAZING<sup>®</sup>

STORIES



# Role-playing Reviews



*In space, no one can hear you fail a morale check*

Science fiction is rapidly becoming the "in thing" in the gaming world. For years, fantasy games and campaigns have dominated the gaming market, but science fiction is now big and looks set to get even bigger. FASA Corporation has done sterling work in producing a steady stream of high-quality products for the BATTLE-TECH™ and STAR TREK® role-playing games. Its RENEGADE LEGION™ series (the INTERCEPTOR™, CENTURION™, and LEVIATHAN™ games) may make a huge impact in science-fiction board games. Games Workshop's WARHAMMER™: 40,000 (see "Role-playing reviews" in DRAGON issue #129) has captured the imaginations of large numbers of miniatures players. West Ends STAR WARS? The RPG (DRAGON issue #131) and PARANOIA® game (DRAGON issue #132) are two more excellent examples of the quality of current science-fiction games.

And the list goes on: I.C.E.'s SPACE MASTER™ game; TSR's third-edition GAMMA WORLD® game and new BUCK ROGERS'

board game; GDW's TWILIGHT: 2000™ and 2300 A.D.™ games; R. Talsorian Games' MEKTON II™ game; Palladium's ROBO-TECH™ game; Leading Edge's LIVING STEEL™ game; New Infinities' CYBORG COMMANDO™ game; and others. When it comes to science fiction, gamers are not left wanting.

But it wasn't always this easy to find a star-spanning RPG. At first, there was only the TRAVELLER® game. Way back in 1977, the TRAVELLER role-playing game came blasting into the solar system, consisting of three black books in a dinky black box. This role-playing game left the confines of the dungeon and the starship (TSR's METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA game was set on a slower-than-light ship) for the vast expanses of the interstellar void.

Starships, strange alien worlds, robots, high-tech gadgetry and weapons, wars and death on a mass scale — this was the stuff of epic science fiction, and the TRAVELLER game seemed to offer them all. But a closer inspection revealed that the TRAV-

ELLER game was not a cosmic space opera in a box. A lot was missing: aliens, robots, and real high-tech hardware. With the exception of lasers, the TRAVELLER game put weapons technology back into the 1950s.

Like its fantasy role-playing contemporaries, the original TRAVELLER game never told you what you were supposed to do with all this stuff. Sure, you could generate characters (if they didn't expire in the process), and characters even had a few skills (provided you could figure out what to do with them). The combat system left a lot to be desired — you played with range zones. Early TRAVELLER game characters could only advance or retreat across a two-dimensional piece of paper; no fancy movements here! Forward, backward, and staying put were your only options. And armor, instead of soaking up damage, made you harder to hit, just as it does in TSR's D&D® game.

Worlds were rated using an abstract system, with few tips on how to add color

to them and bring them to life. There was no GM's section telling how to stage adventures or establish campaigns. You were on your own — after all, you played the D&D game, so you knew what you were doing, right? Surely you could manage. It's only a simple task to map the entire universe and fill in all those interesting details that bring games to life, right?

Even with its lack of tips, the TRAVELLER game attracted a sizable following, and GDW soon began to publish supplements and adventures which added greatly needed background and structure to its creation. Over the years, the TRAVELLER game became vast — more weapons, more technology, less abstract combat systems, more detailed and competent characters, bigger starships, the appearance of robots and detailed alien races. A special booklet was published to provide GM guidelines on how to actually play, and this was followed in the early 1980s by two new editions (the TRAVELLER Book and the Starter Edition) which explained the game more thoroughly and also included some ready-to-run adventures. As time moved on, a multilayered universe (complete with detailed history) slowly took shape, and the potential offered by the original three-book set was more fully realized.

But things have changed, — the TRAVELLER game has been recently treated to a dramatic face-lift to bring it zooming into the modern era. The MEGATRAVELLER™ game has arrived; it more than lives up to its title, and it's sure to keep GDW in the forefront of science-fiction gaming for years to come.

But the MEGATRAVELLER game is not the only recent addition to the realms of star-spanning cultures. The GURPS® Space game from Steve Jackson Games, while being a more generic pack, is also a major landmark in the current science-fiction upsurge; instead of providing detailed backgrounds, it makes it possible to design the universe of your choice or even play in the universe of your favorite science-fiction author. Laying down the basis for any number of future universes, the GURPS Space game is in many ways a stepping stone to things to come. Before looking more closely at this product, however, let's check out the MEGATRAVELLER game, the giant of science-fiction gaming.

### MEGATRAVELLER™ game

Science-fiction role-playing game  
Boxed set of three books and one map  
GDW \$30.00 (boxed)  
\$10.00 (each book)

Game design: Marc W. Miller

Additional design: Frank Chadwick, Joe D. Fugate Sr., and Gary L. Thomas

Editing: Joe D. Fugate Sr. and Gary L. Thomas

Contributors: Loren Wiseman, J. Andrew Keith, John Harshman, and Timothy B. Brown

Cover illustrations: David Deitrick, James Holloway, and Steve Venters

Make no mistake, this game is undeniably *mega*! The MEGATRAVELLER game consists of three large books: a 104-page *Players' Manual*, a 104-page *Referee's Manual*, and a 96-page *Imperial Encyclopedia*. Weighing in with a total of 304 pages, it's an impressive product. The three booklets are available separately or as part of a boxed set. As well as having a handy box in which to store the books and additional supplements, purchasers of the boxed set also get a large, color stamp of the Spinward Marches, a sector of the universe that will be already familiar to players of the TRAVELLER game.

Couple the sheer volume of the rule books with the large number of rules systems and topics covered, and it adds up to a very remarkable package. And well it should, for the MEGATRAVELLER game deals with a vast universe in which the possibilities for adventure are enormous: hardened mercenaries toting powerful weapons of destruction; merchants struggling to make a profit and keep their ship spaceworthy; scouts exploring new worlds; characters engaged in espionage, assassinations or philanthropy — you name it, you can do it. The potential for running adventures in a variety of settings is infinite. Players may travel between the stars to any number of different worlds, explore their hidden secrets by venturing into the wilderness or under their oceans, or simply relax in the starport and never set foot outside its confines. Whole campaigns can be based on only one world, or a group of adventurers can spend the majority of its time traveling between worlds.

**The rule books:** The *Players' Manual* is an essential reference work for players and referees. It contains the character-generation rules, a multitude of skills, the basic combat system, and the lowdown on psionics. Players of the TRAVELLER game will find much in here that is both familiar and new. New players will discover that this game has its own unique character and charm; neither veterans or newcomers will be disappointed.

Kicking off the *Referee's Manual* is a section on running MEGATRAVELLER campaigns. This gives a brief overview of the types of adventures that can be run and looks at the attributes of a good referee: imagination, improvisation, keeping things in proportion, and organization. It then moves on to describe how to referee an adventure session. While providing good, solid advice on adventure and campaign structures, little emphasis is placed on providing staging tips or suggestions as to how to role play NPCs effectively. This section is a little short and perfunctory, but it adequately covers the basics of refereeing a MEGATRAVELLER game.

Stuffed full of interesting essays and entries on the universe, *The Imperial Encyclopedia* is an invaluable reference work. It also contains copious amounts of equipment and sample craft, plus the

details of the Spinward Marches. An integral part of the MEGATRAVELLER game rules, *The Imperial Encyclopedia* rounds out the MEGATRAVELLER game and lays the basis for adventuring in the shattered Imperium.

Marginal entries abound throughout all three of the rule books, supplying snippets of information on the history and current state of the Imperium and giving invaluable insights into the nature of the universe. Large, full-page maps show the three Imperiums in various stages of their expansion and graphically depict the extent of the current troubles. These maps are informative and amply demonstrate the magnitude of the game's background.

Overall, the presentation is impressive when it comes to detailing the Imperium. Where it tends to fail is in presenting some of its rules systems in a far too condensed form. More examples would have made certain rules easier to understand and would have avoided the many gray areas where a second or third reading is required in order to grasp the rules. Typographical errors have also crept in here and there, but in a project of this size, it is only to be expected. GDW has put together a MEGATRAVELLER game errata; it's available to anyone who sends GDW an SASE (see the address at the end of this review).

**Background:** The background of the TRAVELLER and MEGATRAVELLER games was created with a careful eye to detail. It amounts to a very satisfying and highly believable future history. Almost 400,000 years before Earth launched its first spaceflight explorations, the mysterious Ancients had already transported large numbers of humans and dogs across the universe. By the time the humans of Earth (or the Solomani, as they came to be known) were able to reach out to the nearest stars, the Ancients had long disappeared from the universe, and many interstellar empires had already risen and fallen. The Vilani, an empire of humans whose ancestors had been transported by the Ancients, lay on the borders of the Terran system. The two races of humanity clashed in innumerable wars which culminated in the fall of the Vilani empire and the ascendancy of the Solomani. The Rule of Man then followed, but this second empire collapsed under its own weight and the Long Night began: a period of retrogression and barbarism that lasted for 2,000 years.

The Third Imperium rose from the ashes of the two previous empires and has been in existence for over 1,000 years. In that time, it has expanded its borders, has been torn apart by civil wars, has been invaded by outsiders, and has experienced all manner of political upheavals. But the histories of the three Imperiums are only one part of the story — Humaniti (as future humans spell it) is not alone in the galaxy. Alien races border the Imperium: the Aslan — humanoid, catlike creatures

with a strong warrior code; the Vargr — wolves which were genetically manipulated by the Ancients to give them intelligence and hands; the K'kree — militant herbivores who suffer from claustrophobia; the Hivers — creatures who resemble six-limbed starfish, abhor war, but strike fear into enemies; the reptilian Droyne — the direct descendants of the Ancients; and the Zhodani — humans who are so highly skilled in the use of psionics that their society appears abhorrent and alien to the average Imperial citizen. Other minor alien races also exist within and outside the Imperium's borders, adding further variety to this rich universe.

This is a huge, interstellar setting which is both highly credible and absorbing in its detail and depth. The universe of the TRAVELLER and MEGATRAVELLER games ranks as one of the best campaign settings ever conceived for a role-playing game.

To coincide with the release of the MEGATRAVELLER game, GDW has added additional twists and background. For 1,116 years, the Imperium has stood as a solid and reliable power, but now it is being torn apart by internal strife. The legitimate emperor is dead, gunned down by an assassin who now claims the throne by right of an obscure, yet legitimate, precedent. While the Imperium falls apart, other claimants push their 'rights to succeed to the Iridium Throne. The Imperium

is in turmoil, a situation which some of its neighbors have been quick to exploit. Bands of Vargr corsairs have crossed the border into Imperial territory, and the Solomani, who previously broke away from the Third Imperium, are advancing their sphere of influence at the Imperium's expense. Many worlds have been cut off or turned into battlegrounds. The Third Imperium is wracked by anarchy and sectional interests. It's an exciting place for adventure, and this is only the start.

**Character generation:** The character-generation system creates human characters from a wide range of backgrounds. Alien PCs are not yet covered, but GDW is already planning a supplement to deal with the diverse alien races in the MEGATRAVELLER game and has touched upon their use as NPCs in *the Referee's Companion* (see this month's "Short and sweet"). For those of you unable to wait, try to get hold of GDW's Alien Modules for the TRAVELLER game; most of these are out of print, but if you come across any secondhand copies, snap them up, because they contain the finest treatment of alien psychologies and cultures ever published. For now, the 18 human career types covered in the *Players' Manual* more than suffice.

Character generation consists of creating a character's personality profile by rolling 2d6 for six attributes. Once this is

done, a homeworld is then chosen or generated randomly. As well as helping to flesh out a character's background, the homeworld also influences the career opportunities open to a character and the types of skills which may later be learned. Once this is done, it's time to begin a career: army, barbarian, belter (asteroid miner), bureaucrat, diplomat, doctor, flyer, hunter, law enforcer, marine, merchant, navy (space), noble, pirate, rogue, sailor (surface navy), scientist, or scout.

As in the old TRAVELLER game, characters enlist for a period of four years in a career, to earn skills and improvements to attribute scores. The system is random, and most careers involve a certain amount of danger; if you fail a survival roll, you get booted out of the career and your character must start adventuring (under the old system, a failed survival roll resulted in death, but this has now become an optional rule). After four years, characters may attempt to reenlist and gain more skills. Basically, characters cycle through the character-generation tables until they decide to leave the service or until they fail either a survival or reenlistment roll. The main benefit gained by quitting the service early is that your character starts adventuring while still relatively young. Long-term career PCs tend to be older and suffer penalties for aging, but if they're lucky, they may be able to find anagatics (longevity drugs) to offset the aging process.

On leaving the service, characters begin their adventuring careers. They can gain more skills later by study or by learning through practice. This experience system allows characters to continue to grow during play and is a vast improvement on the old TRAVELLER game system.

More detailed careers are available for characters entering the army, marines, navy, scouts, or merchants. This optional system takes longer to use, but the benefits gained in the form of more colorful character histories and additional skills make it well worth the effort. Although limited to only five careers, ambitious referees will be able to use these as examples to create advanced careers for other services.

**Combat:** Combat is flexible, quick; easy to use, and complicated. Do "easy to use" and "complicated" sound like contradictions? Well, yes and no. With simple rifles and lasers there's no problem, but add in grenades, high-explosive slugs, energy weapons, and other area-effect weapons, and it starts to get tricky. With a careful reading, the various elements of the combat system mesh together, but it's not very easy to grasp. More examples would have made this section more user-friendly and would have alleviated any confusion, but the system is still impressive in the number of situations it covers.

With these rules, you can fight a brawl in a starport, engage in a running gun battle down the corridors of a starship,

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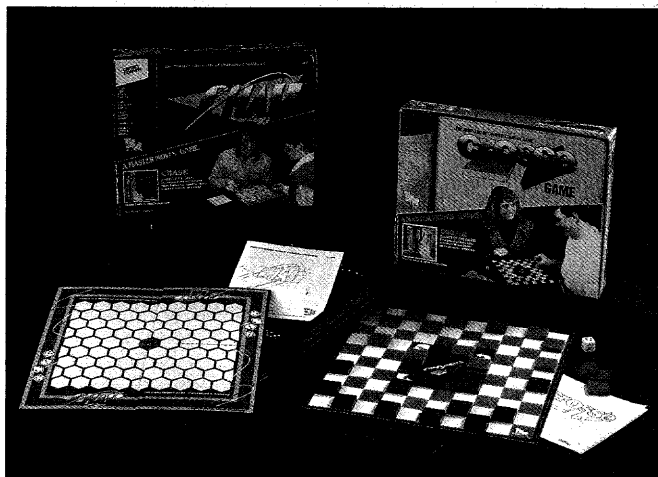




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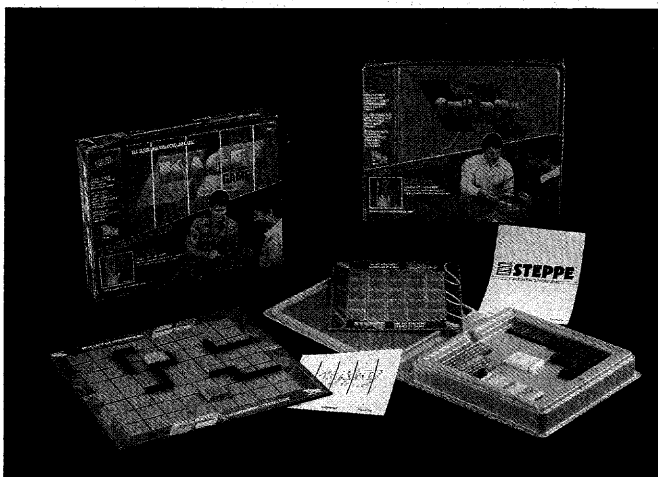
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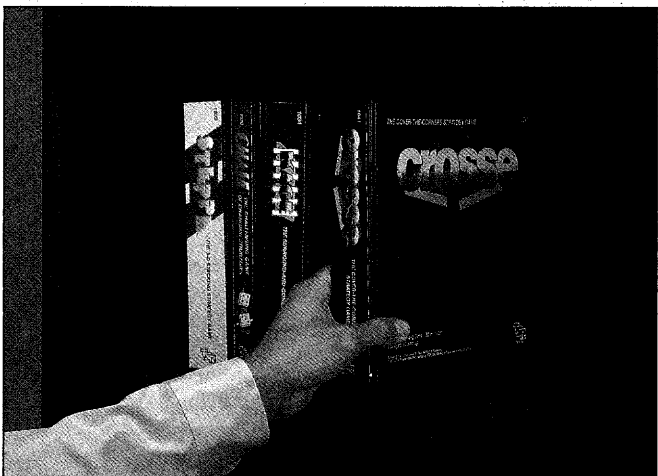
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zoom across a planetary landscape in a heavily armored tank, or blast ground forces into their component atoms using the impressive firepower of a starship. The types of weapons covered include revolvers, lasers, high-energy plasma and fusion guns, grenade and rocket launchers, rapid-fire heavy weapons, starship weapons, and even bows and arrows. Armor ranges from leather jackets up to powered battledress and heavily armored vehicles. While armor provides valuable protection, combat can still be very deadly. Fight only when you have little choice and, preferably, when you have the upper hand. Futuristic weapons do lots of damage, so don't expect to always walk away. Brains, not brawn, are the prime requisites for survival.

**Psionics:** Mind reading, clairvoyance, telekinesis, body control, teleportation, and various special powers are all available, but not without some hard work on the part of PCs. Psionics are illegal in the Imperium, and the penalties for possession of psionic powers are harsh. They are also harder to gain and master as your character grows older, so if you want them, your character had best start at an early age to look for an illegal Psionics Institute.

**The task system:** This forms the core of the MEGATRAVELLER game. This system first appeared in *Travellers' Digest* and was used in an amended form in the TRAVELLER: 2300™ game (recently relaunched as the 2300 A.D. game). The task system is easy to use (roll 2d6 and add any applicable modifiers) and rates tasks according to the degree of difficulty involved. The system is highly flexible and infinitely expandable, being easily applied to personal and starship combat, computer programming, bribery, psionics, and anything else you can think of.

As well as determining the chance of success, the task system also gives you the amount of time required to perform a task, the element of danger involved, and effects of any mishap or failure. This system defines any action neatly and succinctly in game terms, and makes the MEGATRAVELLER game more than just a

reworking of the old TRAVELLER game system. Under the old rules, the referee was often left in the dark as to how skills worked in practice, thus giving birth to hundreds of house rules and individual interpretations. Now they are no longer needed, but referee input is still required to define individual tasks during play.

**Design and generation tables:** Much of the *Referee's Manual* is taken up with describing how to detail something as vast as the universe. Starting with star systems and working down to animal encounters and craft design, this section contains sufficient raw materials to make any referee into a competent universe creator. The systems are flexible and, if used intelligently, produce credible results. Fortunately, star and planetary statistics and a map are provided for the Spinward Marches, so you can skip the star- and world-generation tables, only using them when you want to create a new subsector. Similarly, animal-encounter tables can be left until you need them for a specific adventure.

The craft-design tables cater to the construction of a wide variety of vehicles and starships, from a small gray platform all the way up to a massive starship bristling with weapons. Again, there's no need to use the tables before play, as sample craft are provided in the *Imperial Encyclopedia*. You do, however, need to select weapons for a few of them.

The strength of the design and generation tables is that they are there if you want them, but they can be just as easily ignored until you need them. The scope of these tables is impressive, and you can have lots of fun designing the starship of your dreams.

**Trade and commerce:** This is my favorite bit of the MEGATRAVELLER game. It gives PCs a reason to travel and provides plenty of hooks for adventure sessions. With these rules, PCs buy and sell goods as they travel from one world to another; sometimes they might strike it lucky and make a fortune on one deal, but other times they'll sink into debt — and debt is bad, because the PCs are supplied

with a compelling motivation to make money: keeping their starship running. To do that, they have to make deals, carry passengers, travel away from their starship to pick up exotic cargoes, and visit innumerable worlds in their search for profits. Whole evenings can be taken up with finding the right cargo or with passengers attempting to hijack the ship. As the PCs travel, they get involved with customs officers, pirates, and other merchant lines.

Profit-hungry PCs generally respond well to any adventure that promises them monetary rewards; if there's something in it for them, they'll generally do it. And you can always put the PCs into debt; most starship owners owe vast amounts of money to the bank, and meeting the payments can keep them busy for a very long time. In addition, starship repairs are expensive. Major damage can be repaired by an outside party, thereby placing the PCs deeper into debt; to pay off part of the debt, they may have to carry out some dangerous or illegal mission. Campaigns where trading is important come with ready-made adventure hooks and are very colorful. These hooks are an ideal way to give structure to an adventure session.

**Starship combat:** The last section of the *Referee's Manual* deals with starship combat. With these rules, fights between one-man fighters and enormous battle-ships can be played out. Use of sensors plays a major role in any starship combat; enemy vessels need to be located and have sensors locked onto them before weapons can be fired. This makes it possible for ships to run silently by powering down their power plants in the hopes of not being detected. Combat between ships of different sizes is fast and bloody; when the battlecruiser orders your small merchant ship to stop, you don't argue unless you want to be blown to pieces. Combat between ships of similar sizes is more prolonged and allows for many tactical options.

**Evaluation:** The MEGATRAVELLER game is impressive in, its size and in the extent of its systems. Veteran TRAVELLER game players will not be disappointed, and newcomers will find it a very complete game. While its clarity of presentation is not always as good as it should be, this is more than offset by its breath of scope and the magnitude of its goals. The MEGATRAVELLER game builds on the strengths of its predecessor and surpasses it in a great many ways. Don't let the size of this game put you off. The future is here; rush out and get a slice of the action now. The MEGATRAVELLER game is available from Game Designer's Workshop, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702.

#### **GURPS® Space game**

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- Playing time: 1/2 hour or more



## CONTENTS

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By Jervis Johnson

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A Death Bringer of the rebel Deaths Heads Order. Note the Eye of Horus back banner and the two kill banners hanging from its auto-cannon.



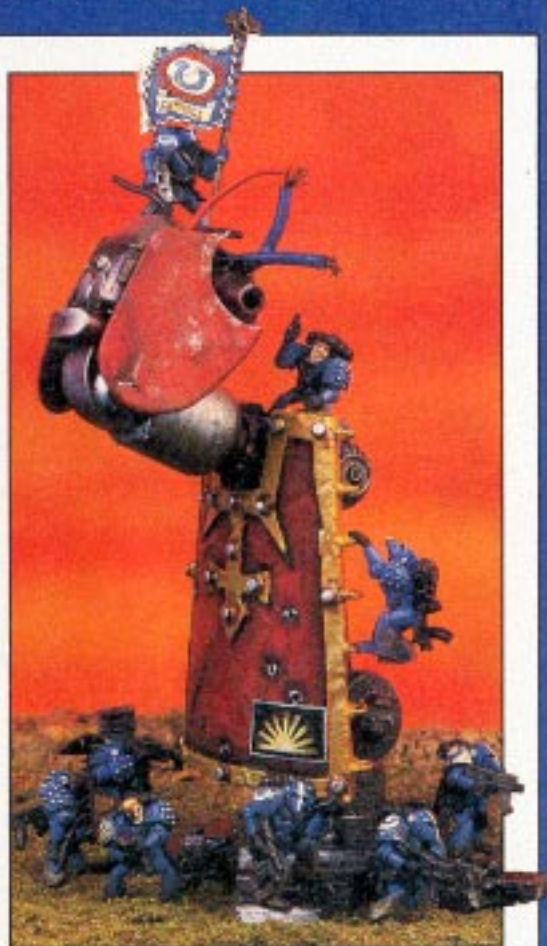
The large Divisio Militaris parade banner on the back of this Eclipse Titan of the Fire Wasps Order indicates the presence of a high-ranking commander.







Nemesis Titan of the Fire Wasps Order. Model buildings converted from 'N' gauge model railway kits.



A squad of Ultra-Marines raise their victory banner on the wreckage of a Nemesis Traitor Titan.



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*Additional material:* W. G. Armintrout, Stephen Beeman, Ben Ellinger, John M. Ford, Don Gallagher, J. David George, Mike Hurst, David Ladyman, and Mike Moe

Cover illustration: Michael Goodwin

The GURPS game boasts an elegant and easy-to-use rules system, and lots of excellent role-playing hooks are built into its character-creation system. To bring the GURPS game into the worlds of tomorrow, new rules have been added to cover high-tech medicine, bionics, weapons, and other types of common hardware. The GURPS Space game rules additions fit logically and smoothly into the basic game without altering its basic mechanics in any major way.

Whereas the MEGATRAVELLER game comes complete with a very detailed, incredibly rich, and believable campaign background, the GURPS Space game concentrates on providing GMs with the tools for creating any SFRPG campaign background desired. This is one of its strengths and also one of its weaknesses — strength from being highly flexible, and weakness from lacking a coherent and exciting background.

Armed with this 128-page book, you can set the technology of your universe and define its major elements with ease. The book describes the types of universes suitable for science-fiction gaming, allowing you to tailor the background to the needs of a particular campaign. It does this in a very satisfying and concise manner, and even provides references to the works of various science-fiction authors.

The GURPS Space game also covers the benefits and drawbacks of the various campaign types, ensuring that the choices you make are informed choices. For example, PCs can search for new worlds, survey them from orbit, then land to conduct a more detailed survey. The advantages are that PCs who work for a government or private survey organization will have a powerful patron who supplies equipment and a ship, but they will often be in remote space — away from daily control by their superiors. The variety of new worlds provides campaign diversity. This campaign can be ideal for small groups — a scout crew can be as small as one person. However, if the characters work for the Galactic Survey Service or a private (probably merchant) organization, PCs will probably explore worlds by assignment. If PCs explore on their own, their ability to keep a starship fueled and supplied depends on finding profitable worlds. For the GM, a scout campaign means constantly generating new systems (and surprises).

Alternatively, PCs can be merchant traders, star soldiers, space pirates, rebels against an evil empire, colonists, or law officers. You can tailor your campaign so that it neatly fits the kind of adventure you want to run.

**Background:** Similarly, the background of the universe is up to you. The GM decides whether the campaign is set against an alliance of planets, a federation, a powerful corporate interest, an empire, or just a group of independent worlds. The merits and drawbacks are discussed for each one, as well as the likely long-term effects they may have on a campaign.

The level and style of technology is also set by the GM; for instance, starships can travel using hyperdrives, jump drives, or warp drives. The relative efficiencies of the various drives influence the speed of travel and consequently the extent of the campaign area. If large distances can be covered in a short time, a large campaign area is advisable. Conversely, a universe where slow-moving starships are the norm can be much smaller.

Extra touches can provide further personalization. Jump ships may require psionic triggers to function, or entry to jump space may only be possible by first entering a black hole or an artificial stargate. Once in jump space, time for starship passengers may pass at the same rate as in the normal universe, at a slower rate, or even at a greatly accelerated rate.

By plundering the works of science-fiction authors for ideas and presenting these concepts in game terms, the GURPS Space game allows you to pick and choose which elements you desire. The results are lucidly presented and highly satisfying.

**Character generation:** The GURPS game system encourages good role-playing by making character traits an integral part of character design. The GURPS Space game provides brief character backgrounds and tips to show which skills and traits are likely to be held by each character type. This allows characters to be suited to the needs of a campaign and provides plenty of role-playing hooks.

Another bonus to character generation is the presence of variant human races. Instead of being Earth-standard humans, PCs can elect to be heavy worlders (short, squat, and muscular), light worlders (tall and thin, with long limbs and spidery fingers), or spacers, (characters who have lived in zero-gravity for their entire lives, consequently being very thin and often unnaturally tall). Genetically enhanced humans who have been bred to perform a particular function are also available.

The coverage of alien races is necessarily brief but touches on the major areas and provides design tips on how to design space operas or hard science-fiction campaigns. The three sample aliens are fine as far as they go, but they suffer from the generic emphasis of this product. The aliens of the MEGATRAVELLER game gain a lot of their credence from being fully integrated into the game's background. Steve Jackson Games is thinking about publishing a book dedicated to aliens — a project which certainly gets my vote.

**Starship design:** This is really a

design-your-own-starship system. Put another way, this system lets you create a design sequence that fits the type of universe you have in mind. Once a particular starship-design system has been chosen, the design process is very easy to use, being far simpler than the one in the MEGATRAVELLER game. It is also more limited. In the MEGATRAVELLER game, any type of vehicle can be created; the GURPS Space game only allows for the construction of starships. It is also worth noting that the GURPS Space game contains very few vehicles, no tips on how they can be designed, and no indication of how they might be used in combat.

The starship-combat rules, while being workable, are very abstract and stand at odds with the tactical emphasis that the GURPS game places on man-to-man combat. While this is not really a problem, it means that personal combat and space combat play very differently.

**Star and world design:** These sections are excellent. They discuss astrographic features such as galactic clusters, galactic arms, globular clusters, nebulae, and open clusters; they also give some fine examples of the types of stellar objects that are likely to exist in a given area of space. Armed with this information, it's a simple matter to design an interesting and evocative campaign area.

The various kinds of planets and satel-



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lites likely to be visited by PCs are covered in commendable detail, and this translates readily into game terms and effects. Once a world has been defined according to its physical nature, its government and other human (or alien) features are easily added. Again, the guidelines include ideas to stimulate the imagination and make this a relatively easy task. In the sections on world design, this game gains full marks for its detail and ease of use.

**Evaluation:** It is easy to point to the wealth of the MEGATRAVELLER rules as being more complete and therefore superior to the GURPS Space game, but the MEGATRAVELLER game has 10 years of TRAVELLER gaming experience behind it (a substantial period in which to identify the weaknesses, expand the strengths, and overhaul the entire system). It's worth remembering that the GURPS Space game is a young system; this book is only the beginning, although the GURPS Humanx game book, detailing the universe of Alan Dean Foster, is already available. Plans have been made to produce a tactical space-combat book, a book of high-tech devices, and the previously mentioned aliens book.

Then again, is it really fair to compare the GURPS Space book to the MEGATRAVELLER game? The two systems start from very different design precepts: The MEGATRAVELLER game codifies and expands on the universe of the TRAVELLER game, while the GURPS Space game provides a generic source book which allows any kind of universe to be created. The GURPS Space game does this in a very clear and helpful way and contains no gray areas; all the rules are well presented and clearly set out. Its strengths lie in its flexibility, in the neat role-playing and combat aspects of the GURPS system, in its description of a wide array of possible future histories, and in its clarity of presentation. Even if you never intend to play the GURPS game, the GURPS Space game is worth picking up on the basis of its ideas alone. For GMs who enjoy designing unique backgrounds for their players, and for GURPS players everywhere, this book is well worth getting. It is available from Steve Jackson Games Inc., Box 18957, Austin TX 78760.

### **Short and sweet**

This month's review offers (among other things) a quick look at two magazines of interest to science-fiction gamers.

**Challenge.** Managing editor: Loren K. Wiseman; associate editor, Timothy B. Brown. GDW, \$3.25. **Challenge** magazine is an excellent source of adventures, ideas, and hardware for GDW's TWILIGHT 2000, 2300 A.D., and MEGATRAVELLER role-playing games, but many of its features are also easily convertible to other game systems. Recent issues have included

combat scenario for the 2300 A.D. and STAR CRUISER games, and adventure ideas and updates in the form of new reports of the current state of the shattered Third Imperium. Individual issues and subscriptions are available from Game Designer's Workshop, P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington IL 61702-1646.

**Travellers' Digest.** Editor: Gary L. Thomas; associate editor: Joe D. Fugate Sr. Digest Group Publications, \$3.95. This quarterly magazine, from the editors of the MEGATRAVELLER game, contains a wealth of background information, detailed adventures, and hardware for the MEGATRAVELLER and 2300 A.D. games. Recent issues have covered new alien races, detailed planetary systems, medicine in the MEGATRAVELLER game, and Earth in the 57th century. Individual issues and subscriptions are available from Digest Group Publications, 8979 Mandan Court, Boise ID 83709.

**Challenge** and **Travellers' Digest** magazines are available in the U.K. from Games of Liverpool, 89 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG; and from Chris Harvey Games, c/o Matthew Harvey & Co. Ltd., P.O. 38, Bath Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 3BY.

**Rebellion Sourcebook** and **Referee's Companion**, both by Marc W. Miller. GDW, \$10.00 each. Both of these 96-page books offer solid support for the MEGATRAVELLER game. The **Rebellion Sourcebook** contains essays on the background and progress of the current rebellion, and provides detailed descriptions of the motivations and power bases of the main contenders, be they human or alien. It also takes a detailed look at the armed forces of the Imperium and presents some new starships and vehicles. The adventure outline is thin, requiring substantial amounts of work by the referee, but the rest of this book is an excellent resource for anyone running adventures in what remains of the Third Imperium.

The **Referee's Companion** covers a diverse range of topics: large-scale combat; in-system operations for starship crews; a detailed look at technology; and essays on robots in the Imperium, communications, research projects, megacorporations, and how to run large-scale campaigns. This is all very useful stuff, and its look at the Droyne, Zhodani, Aslan, and Vargr provides additional insights into these alien races. The book is rounded out with a Vilani word-generation system and various blank maps designed to make the referee's job easier when it comes to mapping star systems and planets. This is another fine addition to the MEGATRAVELLER game.

**101 Vehicles.** Digest Group Publications, \$7.95. Loads of vehicles (101 to be precise) for the MEGATRAVELLER game can be found in this 48-page book. All of the designs, whether military, civilian, alien, high-tech, or low-tech, are ready-to-use.



**101 Vehicles** is a handy source of instant vehicles and a good example of the versatility of the design sequence. It is a useful addition to the MEGATRAVELLER game.

*Space Atlas*, by Steve Jackson and William Barton, Steve Jackson Games, \$7.95. Presented in this 64-page book are 24 worlds for use with the GURPS Space game or any science-fiction role-playing game. Each world is presented in a double-page spread. One page contains a geodesic map of the planet and provides general information about the planet and its system; the other page has information aimed primarily at the GM and contains adventure ideas for each world. The worlds can be individually slotted into an ongoing campaign or used together to create a coherent space sector. A useful basis for starting a GURPS Space game campaign (and a source of ideas for other systems), the *Space Atlas* comes complete with alternate backgrounds for different campaign settings and maps of the Old Frontiers Sector.

THE AWFUL GREEN THINGS FROM OUTER SPACE™ game, by Tom Wham. Steve Jackson Games, \$6.95. It's back! This classic science-fiction game has been out of print for far too long! Now you can join the crew of the starship Znutar as they battle for survival against the Awful Green

Things. This is a lively, tongue-in-cheek board game for two players. One player controls the crew, which uses every item that's not nailed down against the ever-growing and ever-multiplying monsters. The other player controls the monsters, which set out to overwhelm the ship, eat the crew, and choke on the robot. The crew player doesn't know what each item does until it gets used in combat. If you like fun board games, don't miss this one, or you'll never forgive yourself.  $\Omega$

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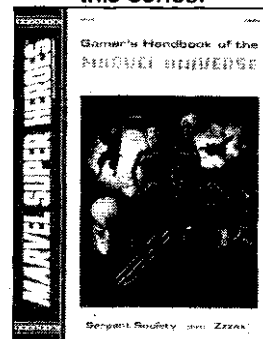
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MARVEL SUPER HEROES

# TSR PREVIEWS

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR DECEMBER

### **FR6 *Dreams of the Red Wizards***

**AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS™**

**accessory**

**by Steve Perrin**

The nation of Thay, along the eastern shores of the Inner Sea, is ruled by the hated and feared Red Wizards. Their legends, deeds, spells, and plans are all included in this 64-page accessory. The sourcebook even has adventures in which player characters can meet the Red Wizards — and good luck to the PCs!

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**AD&D® DRAGONLANCE® supermodule**

**by Douglas Niles, Michael Gray, and Harold Johnson**

This wide-reaching supermodule takes you back to the world of Krynn in four challenging adventures. Many loose ends from the DRAGONLANCE® saga module series are tied up at last, yet this product also serves well as an introduction to this campaign world and its inhabitants.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.95/£6.50**

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### **TSAC6 *Covert Operations Source Book, Volume 2***

**TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game accessory**

**by John Prados**

This is the second source book for the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game detailing real-life espionage cases from the years 1945 on. It also includes profiles of the espionage agencies of 11 nations, including Israel, Britain, France, and Soviet bloc military intelligence organizations. Whether you like espionage role-playing games or just like espionage stories, this remarkable volume will provide many hours of enjoyment.

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### **MU4 *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe #4***

**MARVEL SUPER HEROES®<sup>1</sup> game accessory**

**by David Martin, Chris Mortika, and Scott Bennie**

This huge volume gives you all of the statistics on the superheroes and supercriminals from S to Z in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES®<sup>1</sup> game. This 256-page, loose-leaf accessory comes with each sheet punched for three-ring binders. Full-color illustrations and up-to-date information are found with every character!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$13.95/£8.95**

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## NEW PRODUCTS FOR JANUARY

### **GAZ10 *The Orcs of Thar***

**D&D® Gazetteer**

**by Bruce Heard**

Orcs are rude, crude, and socially unacceptable, which is why everyone likes them. Learn more about your favorite monsters in this 96-page Gazetteer for the D&D game's Known World — and get an updated version of the ORC WARS board game that appeared in DRAGON® issue #132, as well as a player-character generator for orcs, goblins, gnolls, and more!

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**Suggested Retail Price: \$3.95/£TBA**

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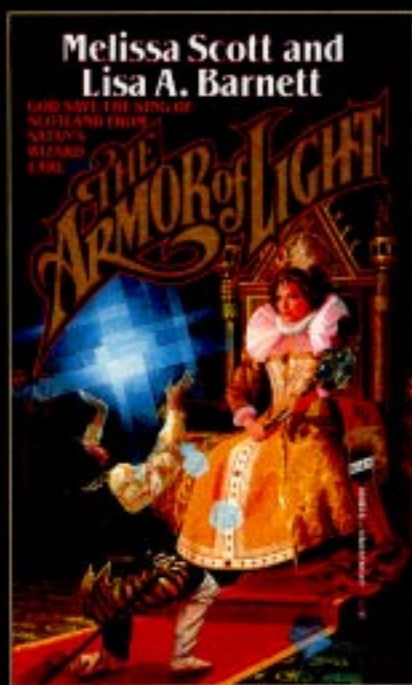
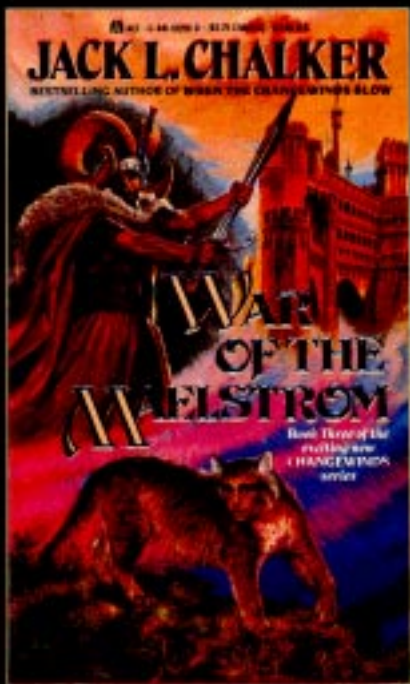
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# The Role of Books

## *Wizards of this world and others*



### **WAR OF THE MAELSTROM**

**Jack L. Chalker**

**Ace 0-441-10268-9 \$3.95**

There isn't enough room here for the complicated essay it would take to unravel all the problems with this book and Chalker's Changewinds saga in general — some of which have been noted in previous columns. An attempt to explain is necessary, though, because the tale's third volume drastically redefines the context of Chalker's narrative.

*New definition 1:* Contrary to the cover description, *War of the Maelstrom* is not

part of a series, but the last third of a three-part novel. That revelation, made in a brief preface, abruptly lends structural coherence to the overall story. But it is information that should have been provided at the outset, and its absence from the earlier volumes manipulates readers' minds almost as shamelessly as Chalker's sorcerers manipulate the tale's heroines.

*New definition 2:* Yes, the spectacular hardships and mind-twisting spells to which Charley and Sam have been subjected on their roundabout way to a rendezvous with master sorcerer Boolean are ge-

nerally depraved — but that's all right, because it's a character-building process designed to transform them from self-indulgent vegetables into self-reliant dynamos capable of saving the universe. This would be fine if the two teenagers ended up saving the universe, but that's not what happens. One of the girls averts cosmic disaster by pure luck, rendering personal growth irrelevant in the process. The other, after watching the fireworks, is handed a storybook happy ending. (After all the novels rhetoric about open-minded sexual attitudes, Chalker's characters uniformly adopt traditional monogamous lifestyles.) The story relies on contradictory premises: that the girls have no real choices (true), and that the choices they make are integral to the novel (false).

*New definition 3:* The conflict that drives the novel is not, as implied in the first two books, rooted in issues of political and racial justice. Instead, it's a petty personal dispute arising from an old academic scandal, and the reduction in scale further weakens an already sagging plot.

What's most frustrating about *War of the Maelstrom* is that some interesting ideas and concepts surface near the end, when Chalker explains the theories of magic and creation that define the cosmos of the Changewinds. There's material for an intriguing yarn in those ideas, but not in the saga as written. Rather than challenging his audience to think, Chalker has tried to direct the audience as a possessive Dungeon Master directs his players. The result is a tale which will satisfy no one's expectations but the author's.

### **THE FAIRY OF KU-SHE**

**M. Lucie Chin**

**Ace 0-441-22563-2 \$3.50**

We have had Oriental tales of complex intrigue and mystery, of love and loyalty in the Emperor's court, and of an Emperor set on a quest halfway across the world. Now, M. Lucie Chin adds to the growing canon of Eastern fantasy with a novel that takes readers into the realms and affairs of the gods themselves. *The Fairy of Ku-She* is almost encyclopedic in its tour of the Chinese heavens, and is an intricately patterned suspense yarn besides.

Two of Chin's three major characters are immortal, while the third merely makes a career out of avoiding death. He is Wei Pan Ch'ao, a Taoist monk with substantial powers of magic (probably a wu jen in AD&D® game terms) and even more substantial powers of deception. For several hundred years, he has cheerfully eluded the Chinese Judges of Death, and his latest feat of trickery is the theft of the magical Golden Chopsticks from the Fairy of Ku-She, guardian of the snows.

While Ku-She is near the bottom of heaven's imperial hierarchy, the theft has major ecological consequences in the mortal world, and she is dispatched to seek the Chopsticks. Unexpectedly, she falls in love with a relative of Wei Pan Ch'ao, and though the chopsticks are

eventually recovered, Ku-She is exiled to Earth for her husbands lifetime.

Heaven, however, has taken an interest in her son, Wei T'ai-Tsung — but various errors in judgment combine to warp the young man's character, and his unique heritage subsequently enables him to become a powerful threat to heaven and earth alike. Ku-She and a seemingly reformed Wei Pan Ch'ao have their hands full trying to keep up with him, let alone trying to end his wave of destruction.

Chin conveys an excellent sense of the vastness and the convoluted internal politics of Chinese heavenly bureaucracy, both important factors in her plot. Her characters are likewise well drawn, relatively small cogs struggling to find places in an extremely large system. And the wealth of detail will ably assist AD&D *Oriental Adventures* referees, especially those wishing to create more magically sophisticated campaigns. As long as Wei Pan Ch'ao can escape the Judges of Death, more adventures of this caliber will be welcome.

### THE ARMOR OF LIGHT

**Melissa Scott and Lisa A. Barnett**  
**Baen O-671-69783-8 \$3.95**

*The Armor of Light* opens with a three-page list of "Dramatis Personae" that reads like the index of a history of Elizabethan England, but the narrative owes more to the drama and adventure created by the likes of William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe, all of whom have parts in the tale. The Elizabethan period is usually considered too late a setting for traditional fantasy games, most likely due to the presence of such things as cannons and gunpowder. But Scott's and Barnett's alternate England, where magic is very real (if somewhat unusual by AD&D game standards), otherwise seems highly suitable for sophisticated adventuring. (Possibly a Victorian-period rules system would be the easiest to adapt.)

Essentially, the book is a spy thriller, with agents and double agents, mysterious terrorists, intricate high-level diplomacy, and dramatic duels. Most readers will recognize Shakespeare, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Scotland's King James among the cast; fewer will be familiar with poet and scholar Sir Philip Sidney, who shares the leading role with playwright and sometime spy Christopher Marlowe (whose authorship of *Dr. Faustus* is not coincidental).

Sidney and Marlowe share an aptitude for wizardry, but Sidney is a theorist and Marlowe is a realist. Though they are sent to Scotland together to ward off evil directed against King James, Marlowe's orders call for him to secretly watch Sidney and prevent the mission from succeeding. In the process, Marlowe finds his writing being fulfilled by his actions, and Sidney is forced to seek magical aid from a politically risky quarter.

The novel has a well-researched feel to it, and Scott and Barnett include a postscript indicating their point of departure from real-world history. Yet while students of the period and its literature may be the

books most appreciative audience, there are more than enough sword fights and fireworks to satisfy less-intellectual tastes. Certainly this is one of the more unconventional adventures to hit the stands of late, and that's always good news.

### THE SORCERER'S HEIR

**Paula Volsky**  
**Ace O-441-77231-5 \$3.60**

Most contemporary fantasy qualifies as comedy in the literary sense — that is, the characters overcome obstacles rather than being overcome by them, as happens in tragedy. That's why Paula Volsky's newest novel is such a surprise. *The Sorcerer's Heir* is the second volume of a trilogy that shows every sign of becoming a tragedy in the classical mold.

Luckily for those who missed the first book (titled *The Sorcerer's Lady*), the current tale is basically self-contained. Newcomers may not fully appreciate the arcane web of human politics Volsky weaves, but that's a minor issue at best; the story's centerpieces are its exceptionally crafted characters.

Terrs Fal Grizhni is the son and namesake of Lanthi Ume's most powerful sorcerer (now dead), and is the cornerstone of Volsky's plot. Raised in the underground caverns of the alien Vardruls, he disdains human ways in favor of their communal rapport with their ancestors' spirits. Terrs' growing powers make him the Vardruls' natural leader, but his distorted sense of identity forces him to reject human friendships and drives him toward open war. His is a tremendously strong and idealistic, yet doomed, personality. Volsky captures this essence with unsettling skill.

Terrs' mother Verran is more likeable, but her fears tilt in the opposite direction. A blend of circumstance and passivity has limited her influence in her son's development, and her extreme unease with the Vardruls limits her ability to reason with Terrs.

Rillif Har Fennahar complicates matters for both mother and son when he infiltrates the Vardrul caverns. His intentions are benign — he hopes to mediate the worsening strife between the previously docile Vardruls and a ruling house bent on destroying the Grizhni line — but his tactics misfire badly when he tries to conceal another motive from Terrs. Fennahar seeks the previous Grizhni's priceless spell books, and failing that task costs him the chance to bring peace.

Matters are no better in Lanthi Ume, where political intrigues seem petty by comparison. Warring factions conspire ineffectually as order collapses, and the humor is decidedly black; a father-daughter team of assassins stands out. (Volsky's novels are easily a gamer's best argument for assassins as a character class.)

The book ends with the original Grizhni's curse of eternal darkness looming ominously ahead, and every appearance that impending doom is inescapable. And although that might not be the appro-

priate end for an RPG campaign (I suppose players of games such as Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game might differ), it is definitely an apt ending for this trilogy.

*The Sorcerer's Heir* is clearly a powerful novel, and Volsky has the potential to make its successor more powerful still.

### THE CRYSTAL WARRIORS

**William R. Fortschen and Greg Morrison**

**Avon O-380-76272-7 \$3.50**

Chris Miller of Avon Books writes interesting letters. (The books and proofs I get from other publishers frequently include press releases or generic form letters. By contrast, material from Avon often comes with a note suggesting specific angles of interest to DRAGON® Magazine's readers. That's an extra effort — especially given the average editor's workload — and I appreciate it.) Her comment about *The Crystal Warriors* was precisely on target: "While it's a *military* fantasy, it is not what I would call a *militaristic* novel."

Fortschen and Morrison are using a familiar premise; in fact, it's almost directly borrowed from Brian Daley's Coramonde novels of the late seventies. Their execution, though, gives the current novel a very different flavor and explores cultural and personal issues not raised in the earlier books. When opposing captains Mark Phillips and Ikawa Yoshio find their respective troops thrown headlong into a war of sorcery in another world, the conflicts that ensue frequently have more than two sides.

The American and Japanese soldiers declare a tentative truce as they arrive on Haven, but the detente proves to have ragged edges as events unfold. Both groups, though, are recruited by a demigod figure — one of a fair-sized pantheon whose members are constantly maneuvering for position — and become crystal-wielding sorcerers in Allic's army.

Fortschen and Morrison have developed an intriguing magic system based on specialized focusing crystals. Some crystals are pure laser-style beam weapons; others confer powers of flight or mental communication. This is carried to sharply logical conclusions, and the Earthmen are nearly lynched for disrupting the economy when they discover the potential for crystal-based mines and grenades. (The supply of crystals is limited, and blowing them up is considered wasteful.) Adapting the idea to an AD&D game environment may be too complex to contemplate, but it's nonetheless a remarkably balanced creation.

But if the magic cannot be translated, the combat patterns are beautifully rendered illustrations of fantasy warfare. BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement tacticians should be ecstatic, yet there is still enough one-on-one action to satisfy those who prefer not to cope with large-scale strategy. Moreover, the authors succeed in offering a plot that blends the three distinctive strategic styles of Haven, Japan, and the U.S. The Japanese warrior ethic,

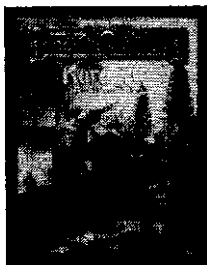




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as practiced by Ikawa, is especially well presented.

Yet, despite the definite focus on matters of war, *The Crystal Warriors* manages to remain a novel of people and personalities, notably emphasizing the characters of the two captains. Fortschen and Morrison display a remarkable diversity of skills in their crafting of this adventure, and the result is a story that admirably lives up to its promotion.

### THE QUEST FOR THE 36

Stephen Billias

Questar 0-445-20670-6 \$3.95

*"One of the tales of Jewish folklore, of which there are thousands, is the legend of the Thirty-Six Just Men, pillars of virtue whose saintly lives keep the world from degenerating into the chaos of evil. . . . common people, bakers, tailors, and so forth, unknown to one another This legend happens to be true."* With those words, an anonymous Hasidic rabbi sends talent agent Dexter Sinister on a world-wide scavenger hunt whose prize is no less than the fate of the world.

But Stephen Billias' account of Dexter's adventures is about as far from pretentious as you can get. There is plenty of vaudeville shtick, which is logical given that Dexter's current theatrical project involves a vaudeville revival. There are the Thirty-Six themselves, who include little old ladies who can turn into ladybugs, a noncannibal from the South Pacific, and an Eskimo from Nome, Alaska. And there is Dexter's skeptical lady-friend, Lola Corolla. (Billias gets major points for his perfect ear for absurd-sounding names, and more points for not hitting readers over the head with them.)

At the same time, Billias weaves the serious undercurrent of a world teetering at chaos' edge, subtly but tightly, into his pattern. His characters enjoy their ability to startle and bemuse Dexter, but remain passionately and quietly committed to their cause. The Thirty-Six, normally scattered to the ends of the earth, must come together so that their work may be judged against the evils and disasters of the majority.

The premise is, of course, eminently suited for a variety of modern RPG campaigns, though TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game agents should leave their guns at home and superhero referees will need to refine the concept somewhat. But that virtue is largely coincidental for Billias, who has taken the idea, imbued it with a strong dose of cautious optimism, and turned it into the most appealing little parable this side of a stack of Bibles. (I am not kidding here. *The Quest for the 36* has an excellent chance of finding its way into all kinds of church study groups.)

But Billias' novel requires no preconceptions to be appreciated — merely the willingness to speculate. And as Dexter Sinister remarks in closing, "on certain Fridays now, I, who am not Jewish, go to

temple just to hear them blow that crazy horn."

### SONG OF THE DWARVES

Thorarinn Gunnarsson

Ace 0-441-72690-9 \$3.50

A name like Thorarinn Gunnarsson on the cover of a book about the Norse gods conveys a certain air of authority. In this case, it does so with good reason; *Song of the Dwarves* is not only excellent Norse lore (which is too rare in the first place), it is a mythological retelling with the potential to become a cornerstone work.

"Retelling" is exactly the right word here. Gunnarsson's narrative draws liberally and openly on the original myths: the coming of Loki among the Aesir, the origins of Thor's hammer, the battles between the gods and the giants, the chaining of the wolf Fenrir. Not surprisingly, this lends most of the volume a somewhat episodic quality. But Gunnarsson's style maintains a flowing cadence that is light and formal at the same time, minimizing the breaks and giving the impression of both nearness and distance. In addition, the final chapters introduce the ongoing threat of the "Ring of Andvari," a mythic predecessor to that created by J. R. R. Tolkien. Only Balder, youngest of the gods, is missing from the volume, but promised sequels will most likely introduce him as Gunnarsson moves forward in "history."

It's unlikely that gamers would want to be drawn deeply into the Aesir realms as players (except possibly in a very carefully crafted campaign involving the gods themselves as PCs). But the legends that Gunnarsson presents are essential background materials for serious Norse campaigners and are far more accessible than the average English-class mythology text. Indeed, it doesn't seem impossible for *Song of the Dwarves* to become such a text — unless the secret masters of curriculum decide that it's too entertaining to be of literary significance.

### Recurring roles

*Star Trek* literature is currently a growth industry, with the debut of novels featuring *The Next Generation* characters and the arrival of the series' first original hardcover. The news, however, is otherwise mixed. *Spock's World* (Pocket, \$16.95), Diane Duane's hardback entry, uses much the same storytelling technique as the earlier *Romulan Way*, combining historical chapters with a plot involving Vulcan's possible departure from the Federation. While individual bits of history are colorfully rendered, they do not flow together well, and they force Duane to overabbreviate the secession story. It's still quite enjoyable (and full of Vulcan lore) but not sufficiently distinctive to merit the boost in format.

As for *The Next Generation* novels, an identity has yet to emerge. Diane Carey's *Ghost Ship* (Pocket, \$3.95) is simply ill-

advised; publishing schedules apparently required its completion before the TV character relationships were fully set, and editing is sloppy – the new series establishes Warp 10 as a new “light barrier,” but the novel still acknowledges objects traveling at nearly Warp 15. *The Peacekeepers* (Pocket, \$3.95), though truer to the television characters, faces the problem of squeezing them all into one story.

Elizabeth Moon continues the adventures of female mercenary Paksenarrion in *Divided Allegiance* (Baen, \$3.95), and the results are both impressive and unsettling. Paks gains notably in experience, wisdom, and wealth, but just as her destiny seems brightest, she becomes the target of mysterious evil forces, and the book ends on an extremely odd note. Moon also provides an invaluable amount of lore on the care and creation of paladins.

*Spellfire* (TSR, \$3.95) proves what readers have suspected about Ed Greenwood for years: that he is a skilled storyteller who can handle a far-ranging narrative very well indeed. The plots and counterplots in this FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novel are numerous, but the focus remains on Shandril and Narm, a pair of young adventurers caught up in a web of magic and intrigue. Readers may be surprised to find Elminster of Shadowdale involving himself rather openly in this adventure – previous material would have us believe he

maintains a much lower profile in the Realms’ affairs – but the sage’s presence is hardly a disadvantage.

The chief problem with Lloyd Arthur Eschbach’s *Gates of Lucifer* series is that the volumes are so widely spaced. Otherwise, *The Sorceress of Scath* (Del Rey, \$3.50) is a worthwhile addition to this relatively quiet but well-crafted sequence involving Scotsman Alan MacDougall and a mysterious set of lost worlds. Eschbach has a knack for constructing clever magical props, and this novel showcases several good examples.

Meanwhile, Simon Hawke continues the adventures of Wydrune, Kira and Modred in *The Wizard of Whitechapel* (Questar, \$3.95). This time the setting is London, and the plot involves werewolves and a latter-day Jack the Ripper. Unfortunately, most readers will be as disgusted with this novel as Merlin is with the plot device Hawke uses to resurrect the wizard. The series (more books appear inevitable) seems to be moving downhill fast.

Much better, if only peripherally connected to the gaming world, is Mary Monica Pulver’s prequel to *Murder At the War*, which features policeman Peter Brichter and Kori Price. *The Unforgiving Minutes* (St. Martin’s, \$17.95) still manages to give a walk-on part to the SCA, and is a first-class murder mystery besides. Pulver is becoming a sensitive and powerful writer, and

this second book’s depth will startle readers expecting no more than the lightly satiric tone of her earlier novel.

### Truth in advertising

The mass-market edition of Deborah Turner Harris’ *The Gauntlet of Malice* (Tor, \$3.50) quotes this column on its front cover – but the quote describes the previous book in the trilogy, not the one to which it’s attached, and doesn’t accurately reflect the comments made about *Gauntlet* in this space. That’s not good marketing practice, and Tor Books should know better.

As always, comments and suggestions are welcome, though I can’t promise to reply personally to all correspondence. Letters (and books for possible review) should be addressed to:

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# The Game Wizards

*Some novel ideas from TSR Books*

TSR published its first novel five years ago. We've come a long way in a short time, and our 1989 book line is top-notch. We will have a DRAGONLANCE® saga trilogy that brings back favorite heroes — Raistlin and Caramon, Tasslehoff and Flint, and Kitiara and Sturm — and documents their adventures during the five years before the best-selling DRAGONLANCE Chronicles. Bold new FORGOTTEN REALMS™ books will add to the best-selling stories begun in 1987 and 1988. Witty, fascinating, and poignant books will appear in the imaginative TSR™ Books line. Science-fiction stories on the cutting edge by noteworthy SF writers will also be released in 1989 as part of the BUCK ROGERS™ line. These books are listed alphabetically herein by product line, so you can easily locate your favorite works and their release months.



## BUCK ROGERS™ Books

This year, TSR is introducing the first of its BUCK ROGERS™ books — an anthology by outstanding science-fiction writers, including Robert Sheckley and Jerry Olton, and a novel trilogy by M. S. Murdock. In March, *Arrival* introduces old and new BUCK ROGERS characters. In A.D. 1995, an American pilot flies a suicide mission against an enemy Space Defense Platform to save the world from nuclear war. Anthony "Buck" Rogers blasts his target and vanishes in a blaze of glory.

In A.D. 2456, the legend of Buck Rogers lives on in a colonized Solar System where Earth is a polluted ruin whose meager resources are exploited by an evil corporation from Mars. In the midst of this 25th-century battlefield, an artifact is found in the asteroid belt — one valuable enough to ignite a revolution, be a bargaining chip in solar diplomacy, or bring a fortune to its owner. The artifact is none other than the perfectly preserved body of the 20th-century hero, Buck Rogers.

**Rebellion** 2456, the first in the Martian Wars trilogy, will be released in May. Buck Rogers joins NEO, a group of freedom fighters dedicated to ridding Earth of the controlling Martian megacorporation RAM. NEO's goal is to gain enough of a following to destroy RAM's Earth space station. If they fail, the war may end before it's begun.

In the August release, **Hammer of Mars**, NEO ignores RAM's threats and sends Buck Rogers to Venus to strike an alliance. A furious RAM makes good on its threats and sends its armada against a nearly defenseless Earth.

**Armageddon Off Vesta**, the conclusion to the Martian Wars trilogy, will be released in October. Martian troops speed to Earth in unprecedented numbers. Earth's survival depends on Buck's negotiations with Venus. But even as Venus considers offering aid to Earth, Mercury is poised to attack Venus.



## DRAGONLANCE® Preludes

DRAGONLANCE saga fans will be happy to see a return to the beloved characters and tone of the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles and DRAGONLANCE Legends trilogies.

In the April release novel by Paul Thompson and Tonya Carter, **Darkness and Light**, readers will finally hear of the travels of Kitiara and Sturm before the meeting at the Inn of the Last Home at the beginning of DRAGONLANCE Chronicles. Sturm sets off to find news of his father; Kit comes along for the adventure. Along the way, they stumble upon a flying vessel piloted by 12 gnomes who offer them a ride to Solamnia, but the group ends up on Lunitari during a war. Eventually escaping to Krynn, Sturm and Kitiara admit their attraction for each other.

On the lighter side, **Kendermore**, an August book by Mary Kirchoff, has Tasslehoff Burrfoot collared by a lady bounty hunter and charged with violating the kender laws of prearranged marriage. To ensure his return, Kendermore's council has his Uncle Trapspringer in prison. Tas meets the last woolly mammoth and an alchemist who wants to pickle one of everything, including one kender. What no one knows is that the Dark Queen is inciting the riots in Kendermore as part of her plan for the battle of good versus evil.

**Brothers Majere**, a December book by best-selling author Rose Estes, reveals the origins of the love/hate relationship of the brothers Caramon and Raistlin as devel-



oped in the first two trilogies. Caramon, distraught over his ailing mother, reluctantly allows her to die. Unable to forgive his brother, or himself for his inability to save her with his magic, Raistlin agrees to pursue their mother's last wish, unaware that they are all pawns in a power struggle between the gods of good and evil.

### **FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Books**

FORGOTTEN REALMS setting fans will be happy to see six new novels in this series in 1989. In the conclusion to Doug Niles's Moonshae trilogy, *Darkwell*, a March release, the heroes of the first two books are back. Robyn must exert her growing druidic powers as never before, and Tristan must exercise his leadership skills with untried wisdom if they are to defeat political clerics, undead armies, and the horror of Bhaal himself. But Bhaal has wrought havoc even in their relationship. They must decide if they will face the future as king and queen — or as enemies, forever separated by failure and mistrust.

R. A. Salvatore's second book in the best-selling Icewind Dale trilogy will be released in January. In *Streams of Silver* Wulfgar the barbarian, Bruenor the dwarf, Drizzt the dark elf, and Regis the halfling search for Bruenor's birthplace, the legendary Mithril Hall.

Richard Awlinson's Avatar Trilogy will take readers through an entire three-book saga in one year. In May's release, *Shadowdale*, three adventurers, desperate to escape the dark elements of their pasts, search for a magic-user to round out their group. Unfortunately, the one they find is destined to lead the group into greater trouble than they were in before. Midnight is no ordinary magic-user; she was recently infused with god-level magical abilities — at a time when the entire pantheon of gods has been kicked out of its planes because of some missing tablets. The plot thickens when Midnight and her companions are accused of the murder of Elminster, the most powerful mage in the Realms.



Book Two, *Tantras*, is a July release. Falsely convicted of the murder of Elminster, the heroes are forced to escape the dungeons of Shadowdale. On the way to Tantras, the party is split over what to do with the tablets once they are recovered, and Cyric is drawn into the service of the evil Zhentarim. Will Midnight and the forces of good beat Cyric and his evil army to Tantras and recover the first tablet?

In Book Three, *Waterdeep*, a September release, the companions flee the wrath of the gods to the enchanted city of Waterdeep, where they believe the last tablet is hidden. However, one of the heroes has cast his lot with the evil gods, and he wants Midnight for her powers. His denizens await the heroes at every turn, and the mysterious power inside Midnight threatens to annihilate them all when they least expect it.

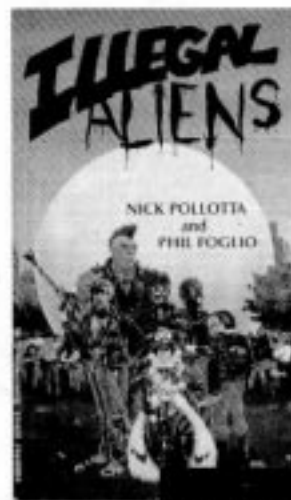
*Pool of Radiance*, a November book by James M. Ward, is the novelization ofSSI's computer module of the same name. Located on the northern shore of the Moonsea, the fabled city of Phlan has been overrun by monsters driven by a mysterious leader. Five companions find themselves in the unenviable position of defending the soon-to-be ghost town against a rival possessing incredible power.

### **TSR™ Books**

Authors on the slate for TSR's newest line of science-fiction and fantasy books include Hugo Award-winning artist and author Phil Foglio; Ardath Mayhar, who has written science fiction and fantasy for Daw, Ace, Doubleday, and Atheneum; and Nick O'Donohoe, whose Nathan Phillips mystery series has received widespread acclaim (as have his DRAGONLANCE saga short stories).

In Nick Pollotta's and Phil Foglio's February release, *Illegal Aliens*, aliens arrive on Earth intent on picking up some "guinea pigs" for study. It just happens that they land in Central Park and that their specimens are members of the Bloody Deckers, a ruthless New York City street gang. Chaos erupts over the intergalactic incident, and the U.N. First Contact Team and the Space Marines only make matters worse. This one-of-a-kind, science-fiction comedy thriller is full of wondrous technological marvels, uncharted planetary systems, mutants, warbots, and advanced and retrograde life-forms.

In Nancy Berberick's *The Jewels of Elvish*, an April book, a growing threat in the north forces the Elvish and Mannish races into an alliance, and the Elvish princess is wed to the Mannish prince. To the marriage, Nikia brings her strange, magical ways and an ancient family heirloom, the Ruby of Guyaire. In the lands of the Mannish, amid strange customs and enemies, she struggles to make both her marriage and the tenuous alliance a reality. But when the ruby is stolen, its true worth is discovered. Nancy Berberick is the author of four DRAGONLANCE saga short



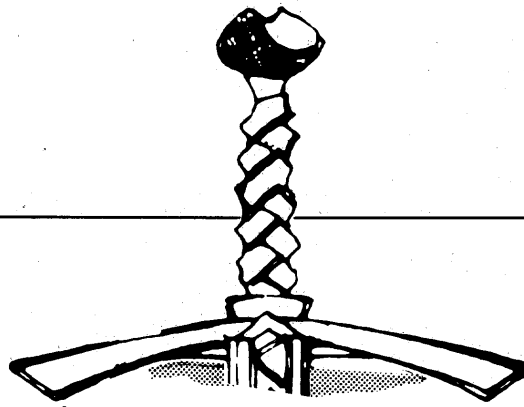
stories and the DRAGONLANCE novel *Stormblade*.

Ardath Mayhar's and Ron Fortier's novel, *Monkey Station*, is a June release. A custodian's error sends a deadly, mutating plague across the globe. Furthermore, it's traveling so fast that the civilized world can do nothing to stop it. Isolated in the tropical rain forests of South America, researchers doing genetic experiments on monkeys find that they've made the macaques evolve faster — and one of the test specimens can talk!

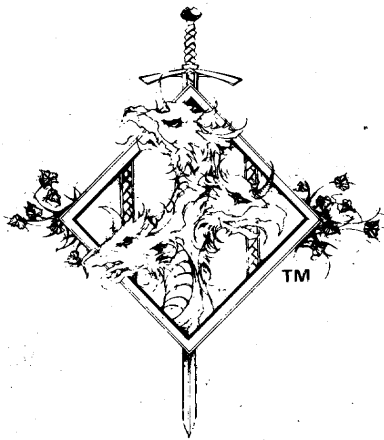
A new GREYHAWK® Adventures novel by Rose Estes will be published in August. In *The Eyes Have It*, a blind elven king looks for revenge and a rock that he believes can restore his sight. Meanwhile, the lord of the dragons is planning an environmental cleanup that will restore his kingdom to its former splendor — that is, free of elves, dwarves, halflings, cities, roads, and villages. Into this stumbles a group of unwitting heroes.

October's *Too, Too Solid Flesh* has a wonderfully imaginative theme. An inventor creates a troupe of acting androids to appear on college campuses to perform *Hamlet*. When their inventor is killed, the thespian androids must solve the crime.

Susan Olan's *The Earth Remembers* rounds out the 1989 TSR Books line in December. In this book, Texas and Mexico



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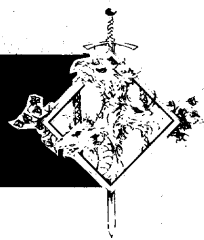
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### CATACOMBS™ Books

In CATACOMBS books, the reader creates and guides his own adventure by exploring the items and avenues of his choosing from 30-plus full-page illustrations. In Allen Varney's FORGOTTEN REALMS™ solo adventure book (due for release in May), artist George Barr's sensational illustrations bring the reader face-to-face with the creepiest creatures in Waterdeep. The reader plays the part of an undead paladin who must take on the undead of the North and find pieces of a magical staff.

Troy Denning's August book, Foul Play at Fool's Summit, places the reader in the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game setting. Web agents have infiltrated several world-class ski teams which will compete in races at the legendary Fools Summit. The reader/adventurer is an agent from the Orion Foundation. He knows who the plants are, but he doesn't know Web's plans.

### Other fantasy products

The 1990 FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Calendar will be available in May. Focusing on the Realms' many cities of enchantment, the 1990 calendar contains 13 poster-quality reproductions of paintings by renowned fantasy artists Jeff Butler, Clyde Caldwell, Jeff Easley, Larry Elmore, and Jim Holloway.

September will see the release of The Art of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Fantasy Game, Book II. This full-color, 128-page edition will display the best covers and interior art from recent TSR fantasy products, including the works of top fantasy artists Clyde Caldwell, Jeff Easley, Larry Elmore, and Keith Parkinson. Ω

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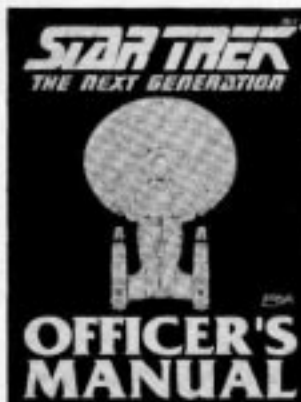
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## Computer-game ratings

|       |                 |
|-------|-----------------|
| X     | Not recommended |
| **    | Poor            |
| ***   | Fair            |
| ****  | Good            |
| ***** | Excellent       |
|       | Superb          |

## Arcadia

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|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| <b>Roadwars</b>         | *** ½   |
| Commodore Amiga version | \$34.99 |
| <b>Rockford</b>         | **** ½  |
| Atari ST version        | \$29.99 |
| <b>AAARGH!</b>          | X       |
| Commodore Amiga version | \$34.99 |

Three programs have been rushed to the market from Arcadia. Two are worth purchasing, but the third is not.

*Roadwars* presents arcade-quality excite-

ment for one or two players. You drive what is known as a Battlesphere — an ovoid, mobile weapon used to remove destructive debris from the spaceways between the moons of the planet Armageddon. However, the magnetic side panels that keep vehicles on the spaceways are going nuts; some panels can not only delay but completely destroy a Battlesphere. Armed with a laser cannon and a protective shield, you and a partner do your utmost to ensure the stability of the spaceways. We found the two-player mode the most successful for *Roadwars* and, despite slow program response to joystick commands, worked up a sweat with this offering. The game is also available for Atari ST and Commodore 64/128 users.

*Rockford* is great! This action-packed arcade game more than equals its coin-op counterpart, *Boulder Dash*. The game has four difficulty levels, 80 screens, digitized sound effects, and crisp graphics. You visit five worlds on a treasure hunt, but you must collect the treasures without getting

stoned — there are rocks on each world that would like nothing better than to see your onscreen character turned into a pancake. *Rockford* is thoroughly enjoyable and will entertain players for hours. This game is also available for Commodore Amiga and 64/128, Atari 8-bit, and IBM micros and compatible machines. The Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions are graphically superior to other formats.

And then comes *AAARGH!* How is it possible that a company that develops such fine programs as those already mentioned can produce such a worthless program as this one? The Amiga version allows you to become either a giant lizard or fearsome ogre. You use the joystick to cause these creatures to eat people, burn inhabited dwellings, and fight off other marauding monsters; should your creature lose in battle to giant flying mosquitos or succumb to cannon fire, there is a rather bloody dismemberment scene as your monster is torn to shreds. Your objective is to collect giant rocs' eggs, which means fighting another monster. Eventually, you must find a golden egg in a volcano and have a final battle to win the game. This game is boring, violent without purpose, and lacks a solid plot. We hope *AAARGH!* is not a portent of future programs coming from Arcadia.

## Epyx, Inc.

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|   |         |
|---|---------|
| <b>Dive Bomber</b>                      | **** ½  |
| Atari ST version                        | \$39.95 |
| <b>Play Action VCR California Games</b> | ****    |
| <b>Play Action VCR Golf</b>             | ****    |
| <b>Play Action VCR Football</b>         | **      |
| <b>Head-On Baseball</b>                 | *** ½   |
| <b>Head-On Football</b>                 | *** ½   |

All VCR games are \$49.95

Epyx has released a series of video-cassette- and audio cassette-based sports games that are quite enjoyable. But first, the software review. *Dive Bomber* on the Atari ST is fantastic! The object of this two-disk game is to pilot a Grumman Avenger and hunt for the German battleship *Bismarck* — but getting there is more than half the fun. Before you can even think of going off into the night sky to search for the German battleship, you've got to learn to fly the aircraft. The graphics are awesome, and the digitized sound is extremely realistic. You use a mouse on the Atari ST or Commodore Amiga versions to make your menu selections and fly the plane. Taking off and landing on the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* is tense — especially landing!

Several screens are employed. The Pilot's Screen is used to fly the plane, with such controls as the brake, vertical speed, artificial horizon, and torpedo release. The Engineer's Screen is used to select fuel

*Dive Bomber*: Giving the *Bismarck* its good-bye kiss.



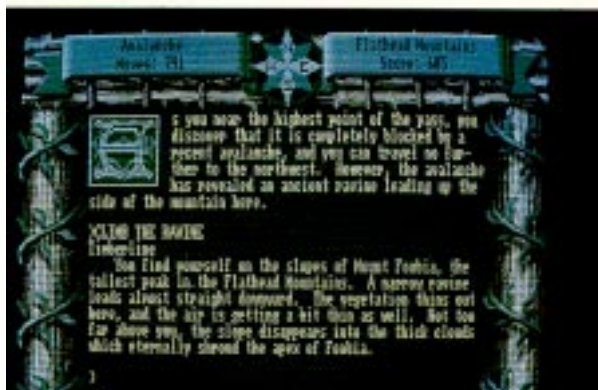
tanks and to set the fuel mixture and throttle. The Navigator's Screen shows a map of the surrounding area and the locations of enemy aircraft and ships. The Tail Gunner's Screen shows the enemy aircraft attacking your dive bomber from the rear, where they can be machine-gunned. The player's manual contains superb tips for flying your Avenger.

This is a most satisfying offering from Epyx and will require many hours of play to reach success. Four missions are selected by drawing straws during the opening game sequence. ST owners should definitely hunt this game down! This game is also available for Apple II, C64/128, and IBM micro and compatible systems.

The VCR offerings from Epyx each consist of a videocassette, game board, and playing pieces. The **California Games** product, our favorite, finds as many as six players involved in a road race from northern California to San Diego — but you don't have any money when you start the game. By engaging in various contests throughout the state (surfing, skateboarding, rollerskating, sailboarding, bodyboarding, and BMX), you earn cash. There are three locations on the California Interstate Freeways that each require a toll of \$100. If you aren't successful at your sports events, you don't win money, without which you cannot go south and win the game.

By rolling a die, you determine the number of spaces your playing piece moves on the game board, which is a map of California with designated contest sites, areas of trouble (road out, mud slides, etc.) and positive karma spots (find a sponsor and get \$10). When you land on a contest space, the videocassette is played and a California Game is shown onscreen with appropriate background music (usually the Beach Boys). You watch a short clip of an event and, should you succeed at the event, the tape tells you how much money you've won. If you lose, you pay the bank. The videocassette tells you when to pause the tape so that you don't get a preview of the next event. However, after playing the game several times, it gets to the point where you can pretty much guess what the next event will be. Some of the taped events are so spectacular that you never forget them! That's the only drawback, and if you play with several people, the odds are that you won't truly recall *every* event until you've played it often — and that could be months in the future!

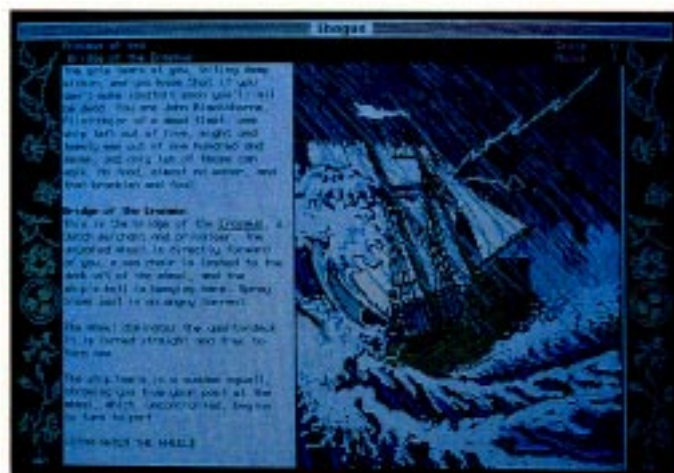
The **VCR Golf Game** is next best in the series, as it has a four-screen view of differing golf shots that are applied to the board, which itself is one of several famous golf course holes. Although not much in the way of skill is required to play this offering, it is at least entertaining. The football version is not as good, as the plays you think you've called are not always shown onscreen. However, a clever red-filter system is employed on the game card to allow each play to be judged by game



**Zork Zero:** The decline and fall of the Great Underground Empire.



**BattleTech:** Gun-to-gun with the steel titans.



**Shogun:** Surviving the shipwreck is the easy part.

statistics as to its success or not. Most passing plays have a video-based play that is shown on your TV, with the results (in yardage gained or lost) shown onscreen. The audio cassette games are quite enjoyable and can be played wherever a tape cassette player is found. All in all, Epyx should find success with these offerings.

**Mindscape Inc.**  
3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook IL 60062  
(800) 221-9884

**PowerPlayers Joystick**  
See below

Many times, we overlook an item

\*\*\*\*\*  
\$29.95



Zak McKracken and  
the Alien  
Mindbenders: The  
title says it ail.



responsible for much of our software gaming enjoyment — namely, the input/output device, the most common of which is the computer keyboard. However, adventure and arcade games usually require that the player use a joystick or mouse to perform onscreen movement.

We've found the perfect joystick for use with software for the Atari d-bit and ST and the Commodore 64/128 and Amiga: the PowerPlayers Joystick, distributed by Mindscape. It is rather unusual when first viewed. Usually, the player holds the joystick above a base platform, with one or two buttons placed on the platform for firing procedures. The PowerPlayers Joystick requires the player to hold a handle *below* the platform, much as some of the earlier "shoot 'em up" arcade games required. Inserted into the comfortable handle is an ultrasensitive trigger that handles all firing activities. Your hand need never leave the joystick itself — which is placed above the platform and has a steel shaft with smooth pivoting, thanks to its ball-bearing construction. We noted comfortable use by both right- and left-handed players. Even better was the long cable that allowed us to jump up from our chairs with only momentary thought given to pulling the entire computer system from its table. This joystick is highly recommended and appears able to handle being accidentally slammed against the table, high drops, cord entanglements, and so forth.

#### Origin Systems, Inc.

136 Harvey Road, Building B  
Londonderry NH 03053  
(603) 644-3360

#### Moebius: The Orb Of Celestial Harmony

Apple Macintosh version \$39.95  
\*\*\*\*½

Apple Macintosh II color version \$39.95

As unusual a fantasy role-playing game as you'll ever experience, the Macintosh II color version of *Moebius* is phenomenal! We've played the other computer versions of this adventure offering and enjoyed all, but the Macintosh II version leaves the others behind as far as screen presentation. Knowing that not everyone has a Mac II, it is only fair to say that if you have not experienced the Mac II version, the other formats are still above average in playability. The 9" screen of the regular black-and-white Macintosh does not give justice to the graphics environment of the game. But with the Mac II, you experience a world in vivid color that brings far more detail onscreen, allowing the player to see the approaching tiger or guards in time to prepare a proper defense.

The object of the adventure is to recover the stolen Orb of Celestial Harmony. Your character can only start his quest *after* being trained in martial arts (unarmed and with sword), and increasing his mortality

Zak McKracken  
On the IBM . . .



Zak McKracken:  
. . . and on the  
Commodore 64/128.





(Body), mental prowess (Mind), Karma, and Dexterity. The success of Karma development is totally dependent upon your skill with either the keyboard or joystick (or mouse on the Mac) as you attempt to maintain Karma within certain boundaries, a difficult feat to accomplish. Once you have been successfully trained, you go off to rescue the land. There are encounters, treasures, missile and magical combats, a fully animated combat system allowing fights with opponents onscreen, and a constantly changing playing field.

This Oriental adventure game is hard to master and will require considerable practice. You will learn much even as you fail. Fortunately, a save-game feature is employed, so you can always restart the quest at a point before your last death. This is a novel, innovative, and enjoyable adventure game.

#### SEGA of America, Inc.

573 Forbes Boulevard  
South San Francisco CA 94080  
(800) USA-SEGA (toll free, outside Calif.)  
(415) 742-9300 (within Calif.)  
(distributed by Tonka Corporation)

#### Alien Syndrome

\*\*

price n/a

*Alien Syndrome* is the official adaptation of the coin-op arcade game to the SEGA system. In the arcade game, you play a warrior whose mission is to rescue hostages trapped in various alien-infested spaceships. As you move through the spaceships, the screen shows an overhead view of different, mazelike rooms. There are weapons and robots called "options" available in the various ships that help hold the aliens at bay while you conduct your rescue. Maps can be found which aid in finding your trapped comrades. Aliens chase you only if you enter rooms that they have made their homes, and they are manufactured by guardians that require several shots to eliminate. An exit at the end of each ship allows you to move on to the next one. This action, however, pits you against an alien boss that must be destroyed before you can move on to the next game level. All of these objectives must be accomplished as a timer-detonator runs down. If the timer ever reaches zero, your character is killed and the game ends.

The SEGA home version of *Alien Syndrome* lacks some of the qualities that allowed its arcade counterpart to draw in the coin-op players. Only three weapons are available to you in the SEGA version: a fireball, a laser, and a short-range pistol. The home game is only for a single player, and that takes some of the fun and excitement out. There are warps in the home version that allow you to teleport to different areas on the ship, and question-mark icons that can make you invincible, but the game lacks maps to show where the hostages are imprisoned. The graphics on the cartridge lack the high quality found in

the arcade version, except for the graphics shown when fighting the alien bosses at the close of each level. Guardians in the home version do not construct aliens as in the coin-op version; they only shoot at you. Lastly, the robots in the original game are not available in the home version.

*Alien Syndrome* is good if you are looking for an original game for your SEGA Entertainment System. However, if you recall the coin-op version and enjoyed it, this translation will not satisfy your yearnings for a similar game. There are many other games for the SEGA system of better quality than this offering, which appears to have been made rather quickly.

#### Spectrum HoloByte

2061 Challenger Drive  
Alameda CA 94501  
(415) 522-3584

#### Solitaire Royale

\*\*\*\*\*

Apple Macintosh II version \$34.95

Commodore Amiga version \$29.95

#### Tetris

\*\*\*\*\*

Apple Macintosh version \$34.95

also available for IBM and C64/128

*Solitaire Royale* is, bar none, the finest solitaire card-game simulation ever seen on any computer. The card colors and card-back designs are dazzling, the digitized sound of shuffling extremely realistic, and with eight solitaire games included on the disk, the game contains hundreds of hours of entertainment. If you enjoy solitaire or any computerized card game, *Solitaire Royale* is an offering you should seriously consider adding to your software library.

We have already reviewed other system formats of *Tetris*. We now have the Macintosh version and have found it to be just as good, if not better, than the other versions. The reason? Now, scored music by Ed Bogus (famous for the *Studio Session* and *Jam Session Studio Mac* music synthesis software) enhances game play, there is a six-player tournament mode as well as an advanced player mode, and a Desk Accessory version comes as part of the package and allows you to play *Tetris* even when other applications are running. This means that if you get tired of word processing or number crunching, you can simply call up the *Tetris* D/A and relax while learning how to maneuver shapes into correct positions for higher and higher scores. Additionally, for those lucky enough to possess a Macintosh II, *Tetris* comes in a color version as well. There is no question that this game, developed by Russians and enhanced by Spectrum HoloByte, is an excellent purchase for any Macintosh gamer.

#### Berserker Works

P.O. Box 14268  
Albuquerque NM

#### Sign of the Wolf

\*\*\* 1/2

Commodore 64/128 version

price n/a

The following review is of software that

cannot be classified as a game. It's a fully illustrated science-fiction novel written to a software disk, from Berserker Works Limited: *Sign of the Wolf*, by writer Fred Saberhagen. The graphics are extremely well done, considering its C64 8-bit environment, and the story lives up to Mr. Saberhagen's reputation. This is a must read for any science-fiction enthusiast. The book appears page by page onscreen with the attendant illustrations. This is a surprisingly entertaining way to read the novel. Other Saberhagen-authored software includes *Wizard War*, an interactive fantasy game co-written with Lloyd Johnson, and *Berserker Raids*. The latter is based on the Berserker science fiction series that has been read over the past 20 years by millions of readers. In the latter offering, there are 10 scenarios dealing with the fight against the space-going war machines. These offerings, for IBM micros and compatibles and C64/128 computers, are published by Baen Software.

#### News and new products

#### Datasoft

(distributed by Electronic Arts)  
(415) 571-7171

Datasoft continues its new product release parade with *Napoleon in Russia — Borodino 1812*. This is a new strategic

#### COMPUTER GAMES

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Model: XT, AT, ST, 64/128/11c, etc.  
Disk Drive: 5-1/4", 3-1/2", etc.  
Monitor: TTL, RGB, CGA, EGA, VGA, etc.

#### Sample Prices

Bard's Tale I,II,III  
IBM \$45, C64 \$35  
American Civil War Series  
C64/128 \$39  
AD&D: Heroes of the Lance  
IBM/Amiga/Atari ST \$35, C64/128 \$29  
AD&D: Pool of Radiance  
IBM \$45, C64/128 \$35, Apple \$39  
Dungeon Master Asst  
BM/C64/Apple \$29  
Star Command  
IBM \$45

#### Other Games

Starflight, Wasteland, Weaver Baseball, Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer, Questron II, Star Command, Wizard's Crown, Thexder and many, many more.

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#### G-P Computer Games

314-75th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14304  
1293 Gerrard Street E., Toronto, ON M4L 1Y8

wargame for the C64/128, recreating the battle that led to the overthrow of Napoleon. Players have complete control over all battle elements, and scrolling battle maps have been recreated from Russian military cartography. The price is \$24.95; with a version also available for Atari 8-bit computers.

DataSoft has released *Cosmic Relief: Professor Renegade to the Rescue*. This is a graphics-rich adventure game that finds the players transported backwards in time 40 years. Professor Renegade has found an asteroid rocketing toward Earth, and he is the only one who can save the planet. Unfortunately, he has disappeared, and the game players must find him so that the good professor can build an asteroid deflector. One of five famous international adventurers is selected to help you find him. This is available for the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST (\$34.95) and C64/128 (\$24.95) computers.

#### Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

One of EAs affiliated label companies is Virgin Games. That company has now released *A Question Of Scruples*, based on the popular SCRUPLES board game. The player, with as many as nine human- or computer-managed friends, must approxi-

mate the qualities of his own personality, such as honesty and busybody factors. With all questions based on a participant's moral point of view, many responses are elicited. The program has been released for the Atari ST at \$39.95.

#### Epyx, Inc.

A new baseball simulation is going to be enroute to retailers soon. This new offering is *The Sporting News Baseball*, which will feature truly realistic baseball action. Epyx has also released *The Games — Summer Edition*, officially licensed by the 1988 U.S. Olympic Team. Set in Seoul, Korea, this software simulation presents competition for one to eight players in spring board diving, uneven parallel bars, pole vaulting, spring cycling, hammer throw, hurdles, archery, and rings. The offering is for the Commodore Amiga and C64/128, Apple II family and IIs, IBM micros and compatibles, and Apple Macintosh. The price is \$39.95 for all formats.

Also from Epyx comes *The Legend of Blacksilver*, wherein players must aid the beautiful Princess of Bantross by rescuing her father from the evil Baron Taragas, who himself is possessed by the mystical mineral Blacksilver. Players will endure tests of skill, tackle vicious monsters, and search for clues and objects to help in the quest. For the C64/128, and for the Apple II and IBM micros and compatibles in

1989, the price will be \$39.95.

The company is also releasing a companion game to its Street Sports series. The new game on the block is *Football*, with a playing field of dirt and concrete. You select your team from the hoodlums of the neighborhood and select plays from a computerized playbook or design your own action. The game is released for the C64/128, Apple II, Apple IIs, Commodore Amiga, and IBM micros and compatibles, at \$39.95 for all formats.

Other new Epyx offerings for the Atari ST include: *Technocop*, in which players become part of the Enforcers, an elite police force, to thwart the international crime family known as D.O.A. (\$39.95); *Tower Toppler*, an action game in which eight towers rising from the ocean's depths must be destroyed (\$39.95); and *Sports-A-Roni*, a zany sports challenge including a pillow fight, a sack race, a pole-vault competition, and a pole climb (with olive oil!) in Italy (\$24.95).

#### Software Heaven/FTL Games

6160 Lusk Boulevard, Suite C206  
P.O. Box 112489  
San Diego CA 92111  
(619) 453-5711

In issue #136, we reviewed the phenomenal *Dungeon Master* from FTL for Atari ST computers. Conversions for the Commodore Amiga and the Apple IIs have come out. FTL will also release a mini-adventure for these three systems that is really an add-on to the original *Dungeon Master* game. This scenario will open up new and deeper sections of the dungeon, and players will be able to design their characters any way they wish. This scenario will include a mini-paint program. Also being ported is FTL's fantastic arcade game, *OIDS*, for the Apple Macintosh.

#### Casady & Green, Inc.

P.O. Box 223779  
Carmel CA 93922  
(408) 624-8716

This company has released version 2.2 of *CrystalQuest* (\$49.95), which in its new format is the first arcade game released that can take advantage of the color capabilities of the Apple Macintosh II. It has 300K of incredible digitized sounds, plus save- and resume-game features. The *CritterEditor* (\$79.95) will also be available, which allows the user to make over 1,000 changes to the game's colors, sounds, shapes, and critter behavior. The user can then save those changes in a parameter file and play the games they have created at a later date.

#### Infocom, Inc.

125 Cambridge Park Drive  
Cambridge MA 02140  
(617) 492-6000

Infocom has released *Journey*, starting a new genre of interactive storytelling that the company calls Role-Playing Chronicles. In an illustrated world of dwarves, elves,



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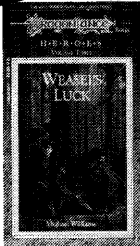


#### *The Legend of Humma* by Richard Knaak

#### *Stormblade* by Nancy Berberick



**NEW  
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#### *Weasel's Luck* by Michael Williams

Author of the stirring poetry of the bestselling *Dragonlance Chronicles and Legends*, tells this whimsical tale of Galen Pathwarden, a young prankster who finds himself forced into a year's service as a squire to a noble Knight of Solomonia.



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nymphs, and wizards, players share the magical adventures of four characters as they solve puzzles, overcome obstacles, and explore unknown lands. You control the party's actions while trying to defeat the evil that has infested the land,

Zork fans will be delighted to know that Infocom is releasing a prequel to the Zork trilogy: *Zork Zero*. Epic in size and scope, this game covers a century of time and explores the collapse of the Great Underground Empire. There are more than 200 locations and as many puzzles as in the whole Zork Trilogy itself. This game also incorporates the first graphic puzzles to ever appear in an Infocom title.

Another offering with expected high consumer zeal is *Battle Tech*, a revolutionary new role-playing adventure game based on the FASA Corporation's BATTLE-TECH™ game universe. This is the largest computer role-playing game ever designed; there are over 4,000,000 locations which, if completely transversed, might result in a reward at the close of the game! Spectacularly animated graphics executed in the style of Japanese comics appear onscreen. You will feel as if you have been thrown into the middle of the battlefield, going head-to-head with an enemy BattleMech.

James Clavell's *Shogun* is yet another Infocom release. An adaptation of the novel by Zork author Dave Lebling, this game relies upon the player's ability to think and make decisions as Blackthorne would, rather than on solving complex puzzles. *Shogun* takes you into a world rich in history and culture, with the graphics presented in traditional 16th-century Japanese style.

These games are, or will be, available for the Apple Macintosh, Apple II and IIgs, IBM micros and compatibles, Atari ST, and Commodore Amiga and C64/128 systems, at \$49.95 for all formats.

### Koei Corporation

20000 Mariner Avenue, Suite 100  
Torrance CA 90503  
(213) 542-6444

Koei has dedicated its product line to IBM microcomputers, with each program capable of utilizing either EGA or CGA video boards. The Koei line encompasses Oriental adventures, such as *Nobunaga's Ambition* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, that are conversions of Japanese software games. Both are historical simulation games. The first offering takes place in 16th-century Japan, the latter in China's second century. Koei games are historically accurate and are similar in approach to both role-playing games and strategic wargames. These games feature high-quality animation and graphics as well as large databases of game information. Each comes with detailed historical notes, references, and necessary maps. The suggested retail price of these games is \$59.95 each. Also out is *Genghis Khan*, for IBM micros and compatibles, Khan, a simulation game based on this warlord.

### Lucasfilm Games

(distributed by Mediagenic)  
P.O. Box 2009  
San Rafael CA 94912  
(415) 662-1966

*Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders* is finally shipping! This is the latest in a line of comedy thrillers for personal computers. The lead character is a journalist, Zak McKracken, the creator of sensational (but not always accurate) stories for the tabloid *National Inquisitor*. He has discovered that a worldwide stupidity epidemic is really an extraterrestrial plot to reduce everyone's IQ to a single digit. The only folk he can find to help him stop this insidious takeover are two Yale coeds and a spunky occultist. This is a cinematic adventure with 3-D environments, dramatic "camera angles," and colorful backdrops. This game is available for IBM micros and compatibles (\$44.95) and the C64/128 and Apple II (\$34.95).

### Mindscape Inc.

Watch for a new *Balance of Power* — 1990! Written by Chris Crawford, this game of global power is said to be even better than his original offering. This version is for the Apple Macintosh and costs \$49.95. Mindscape is also converting the most popular SEGA game cartridges into versions for C64/128, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST computers. The first release will be the popular *Out Run* (\$49.95 for all versions).

### New World Computing, Inc.

(distributed by Mediagenic)  
P.O. Box 2068  
Van Nuys CA 91404

(818) 785-0519 (tech support)  
Jon Van Caneghem, president of New World, has indicated that *Might and Magic II* will soon be released for the Apple II computer family. He has also signed a licensing agreement with Starcraft in Japan, which will simultaneously convert and release that game there, as well as manage the conversions of all New World entertainments to Japanese versions. Currently, *Might and Magic* is available for IBM micros and compatibles, the Tandy computer and its compatibles (with support for EGA video boards), the C64/128, and the Apple II and Macintosh. *Might and Magic* was the Beastie Award winner named in last month's issue. New World Computing has also acquired Task Force Games, best known for its STAR FLEET BATTLES and STAR FIRE games, as well as distributing the City Book and Traps Book series of role-playing game aids.

### Origin Systems, Inc.

Two exciting new games are scheduled to be released by this leading software entertainment company, responsible for the *Ultima* FRP adventure series. The first new offering is *Times Of Lore* (\$39.95), which expands upon the company's superb interactive character environments and adds the excitement of arcade combat

sequences. This game will be released for both the C64/128 and IBM micros and compatibles. The second offering is *T.A.N.C.*, an acronym for Tactically Aware Neural Cybertek. This game places the player in the role of an Artificially Intelligent Cybertank, and it includes a programming language and compiler that allow for creations as complex as the programmer requires. Cybertanks can be saved to disk and exchanged with other players, and other players can even have a different computer system and still play with your tank designs! The initial release will be for Apple II computers, followed by IBM micros and Macintosh versions in the spring of 1989 (no price established yet).

### Paragon Software Corp.

600 Rugh Street, Suite A  
Greensburg PA 15601  
(412) 838-1166

Paragon Software has signed an exclusive license agreement with Game Designer's Workshop to bring that company's highly successful and classic science-fiction TRAVELLER® game to the home computer. This game was originally released in 1977 and includes the challenges of unknown star systems, trade and piracy, governments and politics, bizarre human and alien cultures, and fast-action combat with futuristic weaponry. Since its introduction, the TRAVELLER game has

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sold 250,000 units worldwide. Paragon's first TRAVELLER computer adventure series will focus in a sparsely settled area of the Imperium called the Spinward Marches. The Marches are fertile ground for powerful adventures, surrounded with unfriendly cultures. The game will be developed for the IBM PC and Commodore Amiga, and the first adventure will be released in March 1989.

#### Rainbird Software

(distributed by Mediagenic)  
P.O. Box 2227  
Menlo Park CA 94025  
(415) 322-0412

**Carrier Command** has been released for the Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and Apple Macintosh (\$44.95), IBM micros and compatibles (\$39.95), and C64/128 computers (\$34.95). In the year 2166, fossil fuels and essential industrial metals have been found in an area of volcanic islands in the Southern Ocean. These are the rarest commodities in the modern world. The carrier ACC **Omega** has fallen under enemy control, and your carrier must not only populate as many of these rich islands as possible, but must also slow the enemy's rate of progress and fight for victory. You control four aircraft and four amphibious vehicles, all with offensive and defensive weaponry. There are 64 islands and 3-D solid-filled scrolling and special effects.

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SANTA MARIA, CA 93456

Rainbird Software has also released **Starglider II**, a fast-paced entertainment game that combines spectacular graphics, digitized sound effects, and smooth animation for the Amiga and Atari ST computers, with an MSDOS version as well. This is the sequel to the highly acclaimed **Starglider** that was released in 1986. Players control Icarus, a spaceship complete with a unique 3-D instrument panel and sophisticated weaponry. During this interplanetary battle, players destroy Egron patrol craft and rescue alien colonies under Egron attack. The game possesses fast and solid 3-D graphics and animation to give an incredibly realistic feeling of flight. Stunning sound effects and multiple controls and game options enhance game play. The price is \$44.95. Watch for a review soon!

#### Strategic Simulations, Inc.

(distributed by Electronic Arts)  
1046 North Rengstorff Avenue  
Mountain View CA 94043-1716  
(415) 964-1353

**Battles of Napoleon** has been released. This is an advanced wargame and construction set for Apple II and C64/128 computers. It allows players to simulate practically any Napoleonic engagement on a detailed tactical level. The players can use the computer to generate random maps and modify them, or start from scratch by building maps square-by-square. You can also create armies or adjust the armies provided to suit personal specifications. The price is \$49.95.

#### Clue corner

##### Alternate Reality: The City (Datasoft)

I have found out that this program is different for the Apple Macintosh than for other versions. When playing the other versions, you can't get any type of job in the city, join any of the unions, or learn or cast spells. Additionally, the command to offer an item is not on the chart, and there is no reason **not** to kill everything as there is no reason to worry about alignments.

*[The writer played the Apple II version and adds that the game would be of interest to players who enjoyed The Bard's Tale, but "the only problem is that the Apple II version is just a hack and slash game."]*

Robert Speicher  
Buffalo Grove, Ill.

##### Might and Magic (New World Computing)

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Harry Moren  
Teaneck, N.J.

#### The Bard's Tale II (Interplay)

My clue concerns the Destiny Knight, who is by far the most powerful player character in this scenario. He cannot die from most wounds, and his spell and hit points regenerate as well. However, he is vulnerable to stonings, possessions, and withering, and poison can kill him if his points are allowed to fall to zero. I have found that by decreasing his hit points to the lowest level, he can escape such damage. Also, store an extra supply of the seven segments as they are molded into the Sceptre upon the Archmage's transformation. This is helpful if you want one, two, three, or more Destiny Knights.

John Garriss  
Denver, Colo.

In Oscon's Fortress, you can only take four adventurers into the Snare; this is because you have to have three statues join your party. The statues are Rock, Paper, and Scissor, and they must be in that order. In the Grey Crypt, the answer to the Sphinx's question is "Wise One." Lastly, in the Maze of Dread, when the man appears in a puff of smoke, answer his question by entering "red" backwards to get the Sword of Zar!

Aaron Pauley  
Demotte, Ind.

#### The Bard's Tale III (Interplay)

To obtain the best possible scores, hit points, and spell points for your mages when starting this game — and if you have in your possession **The Bard's Tale I and II** — I recommend the following. When you transfer your characters from either BTI or BTII to BTIII, go to Skara Brae. Find the Old Man and, after he gives you your first quest, change classes. If transferring from BTII, this only works with a single mage; make one of your BTIII mages a Chronomancer. If transferring from BTI, make one mage a Chronomancer and one an Archmage (provided that mage meets the requirements for that class). After you complete your quest, they will instantly be advanced to 35th level, as will any of your characters who have not yet attained this level.

Cody Sims  
Address unknown

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# Through the Looking Glass

*A horse of a different color*

You're deep into a painting session. Choosing your palette with great purpose, you create, from a horde of leaden clones, a unique persona — the highwayman. Astride his horse with sword raised in salute, the highwayman is a dashing figure. He is dressed in soft deerskin breeches and a tan tunic, belted at the waist by a wide red belt. His knee-high, black leather boots are dulled by road dust. A black velvet cape wraps about his waist, draping stylishly over the saddle's cantle. On his head, set at a rakish angle, is a wide-brimmed gray hat surmounted by a scarlet plume.

You paint his horse brown.

*Brown* — not cinnamon or copper or chestnut or chocolate — just plain old, boring brown, the brown of a hundred other miniatures. Somehow, it doesn't seem to fit in with the bon vivant image you've just created for the highwayman. What can you do? How can you change the horse to give it some pizzazz without going to unreal lengths? How can you match the horse to its rider by choosing an appropriate color or marking for the mount?

## Basic color and markings

Horsemen have studied the coloration of

horses for so long that it is practically a science in itself. Horse coloration is divided into five basic groups: black, brown, chestnut, bay, and gray. An enormous range of variations exists within each group, and the difference between two colors may sometimes be so subtle that horsemen often find themselves arguing about what color a horse actually is.

When preparing a horse miniature for painting, white primer is recommended over red primer; it is harder to cover up the red primer with a light color such as white, and it is easy to mistake the red for an actual color, especially when you're painting the horse a reddish brown. If you are going to give your horse white markings, paint them so that you are not trying to cover up a dark color with white.

The five basic colors for horses are described below.

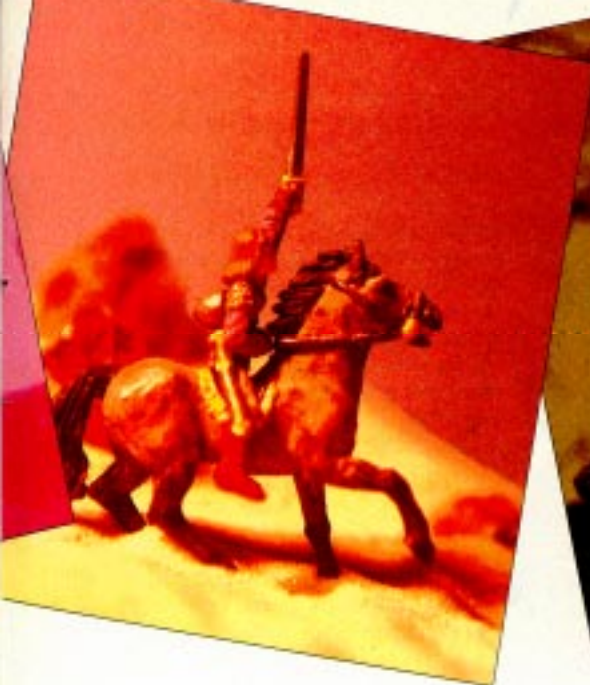
*Black:* Coal black and raven black are two variations of this color. A coal-black horse has a dull coat that reflects little light. To accomplish this effect, use a matte sealer on the horse after painting. Raven black, on the other hand, is very shiny and often shows green or purple highlights. To get this effect, wash the horse with a deep blue-purple after painting, and finish with a gloss sealer. Black horses almost always have some white markings.

*Brown:* Brown may range from a light reddish brown to a deep, nearly black brown. Brown horses have muzzles that are either the same color as their bodies or somewhat lighter. Use almost any earth color for this type of horse. Matte sealer is recommended.

*Bay:* The body of a bay horse ranges from a yellowish brown to a reddish brown. Bay horses *always* have black points — meaning the muzzle, mane, tail, legs, and tips of the ears. White markings are also common. Matte or gloss sealer may be used.

*Chestnut:* The redhead of the horse world, a chestnut horse has a flashy color





that is rare in its appearance. It may be light yellow, red, or mahogany. Sorrel is a diluted variety of chestnut; add white to the color you would use for the chestnut to obtain sorrel. Chestnut and sorrel horses have manes and tails that match their body colors or are lighter. They frequently have extensive white markings. Gloss sealer is recommended for the chestnut and matte sealer for the sorrel.

**Gray:** Steel gray is a medium gray with dark legs, mane, and tail. Flea-bitten gray is a light gray (almost white) with dark reddish-brown speckles ("flea bites") scattered over the entire body; the mane and tail are light gray or white. Gray is not usually a very shiny color, so use matte sealer to finish this type of miniature.

When choosing paints for any of the above colors, remember that yellow and red refer to earth tones of these colors, not the bright primary colors. Almost any earth tone makes a good horse color. Some of the grays on the market, though, are too flat and machinelike in appearance and may need to be washed with a black to give depth to the color.

Most horses have solid-colored coats with white markings on the face or one or more legs. Facial markings range from snips (small patches of white on the nose) to baldface, where the entire front of the face is white. Paint these markings with a crisp white, not an off-white or ivory. Leg markings can be small white patches near the hoof, or they can extend above the knee, hock, or somewhere between. Markings tend to be very irregular in shape and size, so give your imagination free rein.

### Getting fancy

Now that you know about the colors of everyday horses, here are some fancy colors to further tempt your imagination:

**Buckskin:** A buckskin horse's body is yellowish brown with black points. Usually, a dorsal stripe (a black stripe running

the length of the spine from mane to tail) is apparent. Faint zebra-like stripes occasionally appear on the lower legs. Buckskin is a dull, dusty color, so use matte sealer.

**Palomino:** Palominos can range from a very light yellow to a bright copper. Their manes and tails are always lighter than their bodies and are often flaxen in color. Use a color such as Poly S Frost Giant Ivory, or use white with a dash of yellow added to it. Roy Roger's famous horse Trigger is an example of a palomino.

**Pinto:** Also known as a paint, the pinto has large irregular patches of white and another color (usually black or brown). Piebald is the term that describes a black-and-white pinto; a brown-and-white pinto is referred to as snowbald. Within these two divisions, a pinto may be primarily white or primarily colored. Tobiano is a white pinto with large, dark patches on the body; the white of this horse extends downward towards the belly. Overo is a pinto whose coloring consists of jagged white markings that extend upwards from the belly against a dark body. In both patterns, facial markings are common. Gloss sealer is recommended for dark pintos and matte for those mostly white. (White hair does shine, but the shine is usually not visible to the extent that dark hair is.)

**Appaloosa:** This is a breed of horse as well as a marking. Appaloosa coat patterns are divided into a variety of their own categories. Blanket is a mostly solid-colored body with a white "blanket" covering the rump. Snowflake is almost the reverse of the flea-bitten gray, with white speckles covering a dark coat. Drybrushing with white will help achieve the snowflake appearance. Leopard Appaloosas are white with egg-sized dark spots covering their bodies (not unlike the spots of dalmatians). In addition to their fancy markings, Appaloosas usually have pink and black

vertical stripes. Use a coral pink and a very dark gray for coloring hooves. Gloss sealer for dark-colored horses and matte sealer for light-colored horses are recommended.

### The language of color

"A horse is a horse, of course, of course," or so goes the song, but the fact remains that color plays an important role in choosing a horse, both in the real world and in the world of miniatures. Some choices are nothing more than personal preferences, but more than one horseman seems to think that the color of a horse's coat plays an important part in determining its psychological makeup. Theories abound as to why this may be, so color **does** seem to make a difference.

For example, chestnuts are considered high-spirited and temperamental creatures — true to the fiery redhead maxim. Bay is considered the toughest color; likewise, bay horses are sturdy and reliable mounts. Brown and black horses are more sensitive than bays, but not as fiery as chestnuts. Finally, gray horses are considered kind, gentle, and not easily upset.

So how can you use this information to match the perfect mount to your character? First establish what kind of horse your character needs for the purpose at hand. Soldiers need tough horses, horses that are easy to care for on long campaigns. Based on this, soldiers would prefer bays and browns. Practically speaking, gray horses get too dirty. They are also highly visible — not something a soldier in battle would appreciate. However, a general might prefer a gray horse because it **does** stand out in a crowd.

Black has long been a symbol of power, and a black horse, especially a stallion, embodies this power. Since Western culture associates white with good and black with evil, a black horse is probably the only choice for an evil paladin.

White is a color associated with purity,

thus, a lady would likely ride a white or gray horse. A princess, on the other hand, might well ride a chestnut or a fancy-colored horse, such as a palomino or Appaloosa. Female adventurers would be well suited for a bay or steel-gray horse.

A flamboyant character, such as the highwayman mentioned at the start of this article, would go for the showiest horse he could find. A pinto or an Appaloosa would be a good choice, or a chestnut with a lot of white markings. These are only general guidelines, so feel free to experiment.

### Magical markings

Certain markings have been ascribed to have magical importance. These various markings and their purported qualities are listed below. Note that medicine hat and bloody shoulder are both real-world markings; magic saddle is a fantasy invention.

**Medicine hat:** This is a marking worn by some pintos. The ears are covered with a dark "bonnet" and the chest by a dark "shield." The Cheyenne Indians thought that these horses had mystical powers. Shielded by these markings, a horse with medicine-hat markings was believed to be impervious in battle. The rider of such a horse was likewise protected as long as he was mounted. Because it is a shield, the medicine hat marking is considered a form of magical armor, awarding variable pro-

tection to horse and rider without weighing the horse down. Add +1 to +4 to the armor-class rating of the horse and of the character when he is mounted. Movement is not affected by this change.

**Bloody shoulder:** This is a marking characterized by a red coloration over the horse's shoulder. Bedouin legend tells of a devoted mare who carried her wounded master over her shoulder to safety. This marking is extremely rare. Any horse exhibiting it proves loyal to one person only and may not be ridden by anyone else. If a horse with this type of marking is stolen, it runs away from its captor at the first opportunity and seeks its true master. The horse does not panic or run away from melee as long as its master is alive. If the master dies, the horse then runs wild until it is captured and tamed by another person. In order to tame a horse with the bloody shoulder marking, a character must have a charisma of 15 or greater; even then, there is only a 20% chance of taming the horse.

**Magic saddle:** This is another pintolike marking in which a dark saddle-shaped patch covers the horse's back. Any rider mounted on this horse will not fall off or be knocked off in battle. The rider may dismount only when it is his wish to do so. Because of this, the rider may even sleep in the saddle, since falling off is virtually impossible (the key word is "virtually").

### Conclusion

What does this all mean for the modeler? Well, a basic understanding of horse coloration can provide a useful set of guidelines when realistically painted horse miniatures are desired. Of course, you can always paint your figures lavender or green if you so desire; this is, after all, fantasy. But when you want realism, this article can be invaluable in providing horses with individuality and authenticity. Above all, it makes painting them a lot more fun!

Ω

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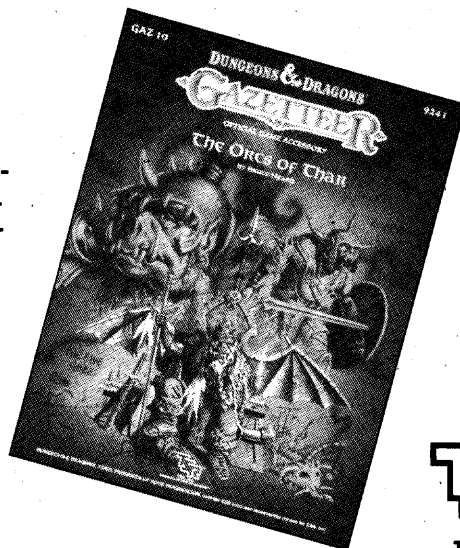
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## Index to Advertisers

|  |                 |   |                                      |
|--|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Acropolis Design*                        | 86              | Strategic Simulations, Inc.                       | 9                                    |
| Alley Bookshop (Preston Games)*          | 77              | Supremacy Games, Inc.                             | 10                                   |
| AMAZING® Stories                         | 49, 101         | Tabletop Games*                                   | 67                                   |
| Bantam Books (Spectra)                   | 5               | Telford Models*                                   | 60                                   |
| Bard Games                               | 52              | TM Games*   | 71                                   |
| Britton Designs (Elysian Field)          | 36              | Triple D & F Company                              | 78                                   |
| Crazy Dwarf*                             | 48              | TSR, Inc.   | inside front cover, 1, 4, 32, 53, 61 |
| Dice & Games (Hobbygames)*               | 29              | 62, 63, 66, 76, 82, inside back cover, back cover |                                      |
| DRAGON® Magazine                         | 21, insert card | TSR Ltd.  | 20                                   |
| DUNGEON® Adventures                      | 87, insert card | Virgin Games Centre*                              | 79                                   |
| Esdevium Games*                          | 104             | Warlord Games Shop*                               | 12                                   |
| Final Frontier*                          | 54              |   |                                      |
| Game Designers' Workshop                 | 90              |   |                                      |
| G-P Computer Games                       | 75              |   |                                      |
| Game Systems, Inc.                       | 33              |   |                                      |
| Games Review Monthly*                    | 83              |   |                                      |
| Games Workshop US                        |                 |   |                                      |
| (Citadel Miniatures)                     | 31, 55-58       |   |                                      |
| Gladiator Games*                         | 30              |   |                                      |
| Guardroom*                               | 59              |   |                                      |
| Jade Games*                              | 11              |   |                                      |
| KJC Games*                               | 13              |   |                                      |
| Legend*                                  | 19              |   |                                      |
| Magicware                                | 91              |   |                                      |
| Mayfair Games, Inc.                      | 70              |   |                                      |
| NAL Books                                | 7               |   |                                      |
| Palladium Books                          | 37, 96          |   |                                      |
| Prince August Ltd. (Mithril Miniatures)* | 97              |   |                                      |
| RPGA™ Network                            |                 |   |                                      |
| (POLYHEDRON™ Newszine)                   | 95              |   |                                      |

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# The Marvel<sup>®</sup>-Phile

## Back from Earth-S: the Redeemers™ (Part 1)

This month, our exploration of the Marvel Universe takes a detour to a divergent world. Our destination is an alternate world called both "Other-Earth" and "Earth-S," the world of the Squadron Supreme. This world has far fewer superbeings than the Marvel Earth. Also, the villains tend to be few and weak, while the heroes are so few in number that a single team can incorporate them all. During the 1940s, this team was the illustrious Golden Agency. In modern times, they have been replaced by the younger, more powerful, and more active Squadron Supreme. This team ended up plunging their world into chaos, then tried to make amends by transforming America into a

paradise by means of the Utopia Program. However, we will not discuss the Squadron Supreme itself. Details of their lives and powers are found in the *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe, Vol. 4*. Instead, we'll concentrate on their adversaries, the last hope of Earth-S, the Redeemers.

The Redeemers were the brainchild of Nighthawk (Kyle Richmond, formerly Squadron Supreme cofounder and ex-President of Earth-S's United States). When Nighthawk realized the potential for abuse in the Utopia Program, he left the Squadron Supreme and began his covert war against his former friends. He found new allies in a variety of places. One was a

former Golden Agency member, now retired; another was an expelled Squadron Supreme member; others were newly discovered superhumans. The rest were villains who were more afraid of being captured than of working with their nemesis Nighthawk. The Redeemers' final roster included Black Archer (formerly the Golden Archer), Foxfire, Haywire, Inertia, Lamprey, Master Menace, Mink, Moon-glow, Nighthawk, Pinball, Professor Imam, Redstone, Remnant, and Thermite. As some of these characters infiltrated the Squadron Supreme, they were included in that team's entry in MU4 *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe, Vol. IV*. Here, we will concentrate on two members of that crew: Master Menace and Professor Imam. Next issue, we will conclude this two-part series, as we look at three other members of the Redeemers: Mink, Pinball, and Remnant.

### MASTER MENACE™

Dr. Emil Burbank

Normal In Armor  
F GD(10) RM(30) Health: 36/130  
A TY(6) EX(20)  
S GD(10) RM(30) Karma: 90/90  
E GD(10) AM(50)  
R IN(40) IN(40) Resources: AM  
I IN(40) IN(40)  
P GD(10) GD(10) Popularity: -30

### KNOWN POWERS

*Hyperinvention:* Master Menace has the Amazing ability to build about anything he wants to. He and Tom Thumb are equally the most inventive men on Earth-S, although their technological quests have taken them in different directions. Anything one man builds, the other can counter with a new device. The rest of Master Menace's powers are derived from his variation inventions, many of which are incorporated into his battle armor.

### EQUIPMENT

*Battle Armor:* Master Menace wears a steel suit designed to give him protection, powers, and enhanced abilities. It is the functional equivalent of Dr. Doom's or Iron Man's armor. Master Menace's suit has Incredible Material Strength and gives him Incredible protection from physical attacks and extreme environments. The suit contains a variety of useful devices as well as a number of modules and circuits that Master Menace can reconfigure to perform any desired task. The suit is normally powered by a small nuclear generator; if removed from the armor, the generator could easily supply a large building's power needs. An induction coil hidden within the suit's chest insignia serves as an auxiliary power source. The induction coil has the equivalent of Amazing-rank absorption power, and it



can convert external energy into power for special tasks. The battle armor can recycle air, water, and food for several weeks survival.

**Dimension Travel:** Master Menace's "D-Ray" has the Feeble ability to transport a chosen subject to any preset dimension. A large D-Ray is secured on a platform in Master Menace's secret headquarters. This ray can automatically home in on Master Menace's armor, no matter what dimension he is in. Master Menace's portable bazookalike D-Rays can transport a single person to a preset dimension. The ray has a range of one area. Using it is treated as an attack, and the intended target can try to evade it through normal means. A scanner connected to his main D-Ray enables Master Menace to view scenes in other dimensions.

**Force Field:** Master Menace possesses two types of force fields, both of Monstrous strength. One of these force fields is designed to give Master Menace's armor enhanced protection; the other is located in his headquarters. The latter acts as a booby trap; it encloses intruders in individual force-bubbles, which float in midair and travel throughout the lair at Master Menace's control. The bubbles are completely energy resistant and allow only visible light of normal intensities to penetrate them. If Master Menace wants to interrogate a captive, he must reduce the diameter of the sphere so that the captive's head emerges.

**Levitation:** Several of Master Menace's devices are equipped with Feeble antigravity powers. These are primarily used to help him move bulky loads. Curiously, no such device is included in his armor. This may be due to unknown technological problems.

**Teleportation:** A variation of his D-Ray can teleport Master Menace up to 1,000 miles. The teleport beam has a Good power rank. A homing device in Master Menace's armor enables the beam to automatically return him home from any location within its range.

**Spaceship:** Master Menace's flier performs a variety of functions: it can hover, fly through air, and orbit at low altitudes. In addition, it can be surrounded by other materials to disguise its true nature. For example, Master Menace once covered the exterior with rock when he wanted the ship to be mistaken for a meteor. The functions of this spaceship are assigned the following values:

|                |              |             |                   |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| <b>Control</b> | <b>Speed</b> | <b>Body</b> | <b>Protection</b> |
| RM             | Y            | EX          | EX                |

**Secret Headquarters:** Master Menace works out of a mountaintop site that is disguised as an observatory. The head-

quarters complex contains a well-stocked warehouse and automated factory complex. Operations are overseen by Cerebrac, an advanced computer system. Cerebrac has the equivalent of Amazing Reason for purposes of data processing, but it is not self-aware. The exterior walls of the headquarters have Amazing material strength.

#### HISTORY

Dr. Emil Burbank is perhaps the most dangerous man on Earth-S. He is the proverbial mad scientist out to conquer the world. While he is a brilliant physicist and inventor, he is also an egomaniac. He feels contempt toward other people and sees them as little more than ignorant peasants (at best) or as prey (at worst). Dr. Burbank is a solitary man. He sees few people as worthy of even serving him, let alone remaining in his presence. He does not enter into alliances proposed by others. For this reason, Master Menace originally chose not to actively assist the Redeemers. Instead, he undertook an independent plot involving the android Hyperion from Marvel Earth. When that plot failed, Master Menace grudgingly agreed to assist the Redeemers by building a device capable of undoing the effects of the Behavior Modification Machine. (The Behavior Modification Machine was built by Tom Thumb to alter the brain patterns of criminals, thus changing villains into super heroes. As mentioned, the Redeemers found a way around this and changed the villains back to normal.) Master Menace chose to sit out the final battle, however, and observe the results from afar.

**Post-Squadron Adventures:** The defeat of the Squadron Supreme means that the way is clear for Master Menace to continue his program of eventual world conquest. However, he first has a minor security problem to solve: Hyperion, Mink, and Remnant know the location of his headquarters. As a result, Master Menace must either move to a new lair or somehow silence those three.

#### PROFESSOR IMAM™

|   |          |                     |
|---|----------|---------------------|
| F | FE (2)   | Health: 110         |
| A | PR (4)   |                     |
| S | PR (4)   | Karma: 180          |
| E | UN (100) |                     |
| R | IN (40)  | Popularity: GD (10) |
| I | IN (40)  |                     |
| P | UN (100) | Resources: AM (50)  |

#### KNOWN POWERS

Professor Imam's full range of powers is unknown. Because he is Earth-S's Sorcerer Supreme, we can reasonably assume that, when he was in his prime, his powers were equal to those of Doctor Strange and other, more familiar Sorcerers Supreme. Now, however, Professor Imam is an old man who no longer has any real control over the physical world. He hoards his remaining powers in the simple effort to stay alive long enough to train his replacement (who will appear centuries from now). The following are the few powers he currently employs.

**Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, and Remote Sensing:** Although he remains sequestered within his hidden sanctum, Professor Imam uses these Remarkable powers to monitor conditions in the outside world. He has a maximum range of 250,000 miles with these powers, although he rarely has reason to extend his senses beyond the atmosphere.

**Cosmic Awareness:** Professor Imam retains his Shift-Z awareness of the cosmos. He is able to observe the patterns of events on a number of dimensional planes. Professor Imam is able to perform a Power Stunt by extrapolating events centuries into the future.





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*Dimension Travel:* Professor Imam retains the Incredible ability to transport several people to other dimensions at will, while he remains within his sanctum. Such transportees must be within 10' of Professor Imam originally, although transportees can be retrieved from any location by the Professor.

*Enchantment:* Professor Imam retains the ability to endow items with specific useful powers. In his current state, he limits his enchantments to detection or sensory powers. For example, Professor Imam gave Nighthawk a small crystal pyramid capable of detecting superhuman allies at a range of 1,000 miles. For game purposes, such enchanted items can have a single power of up to Amazing rank.

*The Third Eye:* This magical talisman is worn by Professor Imam on his chest. This item appears as an open eye within an inverted triangle. The Third Eye may be similar in nature and powers to Dr. Strange's Eye of Agamotto. When Professor Imam uses a power, it is focused through this triangle.

#### HISTORY

The professor was one of the original members of the Golden Squadron. Although he originally championed the American cause, he later expanded his

concerns to encompass the entire world. Professor Imam grew increasingly remote from the daily, mundane crime fighting of the Golden Agency. He eventually retired from the world to concentrate on his final task — staying alive long enough to train his successor, who will appear 443 years from now. It is unknown how and why his physical powers waned. He retains his mental powers and uses them to monitor the world and to await his successor's birth. Because of his weakened condition, Professor Imam was unable to actively aid Nighthawk when he came seeking allies. Instead, Professor Imam transported Nighthawk to Marvel Earth, then later returned him (along with his allies Mink, Pinball, and Remnant). As a final gift, Professor Imam gave Nighthawk an enchanted pyramid that enabled him to locate more allies on Earth-S. These allies included Haywire, Inertia, Moonglow, Redstone, and Thermite.

*Post-Squadron Adventures:* Conditions on Earth-S rarely affect Professor Imam. Most often, he remains sitting in his Temple of Contemplation. His only concern is his survival and the training of his successor. If a dire emergency threatens his current existence or his successor's eventual birth, Professor Imam may summon the aid of other heroes. Likewise, he may give marginal support to requests for aid from

other heroes, mostly in the form of enchanted devices.

Next month, we'll conclude this two-part installment of "The Marvel-Phile" by listing three other members of the Redeemers: Pinball, Remnant, and the Mink. □

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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the May 1989 issue is the last Monday of March 1989. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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## PROJECT . . . GENESIS IV, January 15

This fantasy-gaming convention will be held at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 N. Weber in Fresno, Ca. Featured tournament and open-play events include BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, STAR WARS\*, TOON\*, and AD&D® games, with computer gaming, Japanese films, a miniatures contest, a swap meet, and more. Preregistration is \$3 if paid before January 1; after that, it is \$5. Dealers' tables are \$20 for an 8' table; check on availability. Swap meet tables are \$5 for a whole table and \$3.50 for a half. Table space is required for this event. PROJECT . . . GENESIS IV is in need of judges; those accepted receive a refund on their registration fees. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 East Washington, Fresno CA 93727. Make all checks payable to Phillip S. Pittz.

## ICON XIII, January 20-22

Only slightly delayed, ICON XIII will meet at the Rodeway Inn, at I-80 and Highway 965, at Coralville, Iowa. Author Joel Rosenberg and artist Darlene Coltrain are guests of honor, and Algis Budrys is the toastmaster. Other guests include Joe and Gay Haldeman and Mickey Zucker Reichert. Featured events include the Trans-Iowa Canal Company, a film festival, a space-opera round-robin, an art show, a writers' workshop, and more. Registration fees are \$15 until January 1, and \$18 at the door. For hotel information, call: (800) 228-2000 (toll-free) or (319) 354-7770, and tell them you're with ICON. For con information, write to: ICON XIII, PO. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

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Fla. Events will include AD&D®, TRAVELLER\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, CAR WARS\*, BATTLETECH\*, INTERCEPTER\*, and SEEKRIEC\* games, board gaming, a KILLER\* tournament, dealers, an art show and auction, a miniatures-painting contest, demonstrations by the SCA, and other role-playing and gaming events. Reservations may be made through the hotel by calling: (904) 398-8800. Room rates are \$49 for single to quad occupancy. Registration for the weekend is \$18 at the door. Preregistration is \$12 if mailed before January 22. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983 or (904) 246-1325.

## REDCON '89, February 3-5

The Royal Military College of Canada will hold its annual International War Gaming Convention in Yeo Hall on the campus grounds in Kingston, Ontario. Special guest for this event is Larry Bond of the war-games club of USMA, West Point. Scheduled events include HARPOON\*, BATTLETECH\*, microarmor miniatures, Napoleonic, CENTURION\*, and AD&D® tournaments, plus plenty of open gaming. Retail vendors and game-company representatives will demonstrate and sell their wares. Registration is \$5 Canadian in advance and \$7 Canadian at the door for the entire conference. Send an SASE to: RMC Combat Simulations Group, c/o OCdt Derek Buxton, 4 Sqn., Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA, K7K 5L0; or call: (613) 541-6277, between 7 and 10 P.M. week nights. Preregistration must be completed before January 1.

## WARCON '89, February 3-5

Texas's oldest gaming convention will be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Tex. Featured events include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® and a CHAMPIONS\* Open Team tournament, with a variety of board games, miniatures events, role-playing tournaments, a dealers' room, and 24-hour gaming. Preregistration is \$8, or \$11 at the door. Write to: MSC NOVA, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844; or call: (409) 845-1515.

## THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN '89 February 4-5

The Southern Illinois University Strategic Games Society will host the second-annual Egyptian Campaign at the SIU Student Center on the campus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill. Featured events include RPGA™ Network tournaments, with AD&D®, BOOT HILL®, DIPLOMACY\*, CIRCUS MAXIMUS\*, RUNEQUEST\*, CAR WARS\*, GURPS\*, BATTLETECH\*, CHAMPIONS\*, ROBOTECH\*, ACE OF ACES\*, WINGS\*, and SUPREMACY\* games. A science-fiction and fantasy miniatures-painting competition, Clay-O-Rama, an exhibitors' area, and more are also offered. Preregistration is \$8 for the weekend, or \$5 per day at the door. Send a business-sized SASE to: SIU Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale IL 62901-4425; or call: David T.

❖ indicates an Australian convention.

\* indicates a Canadian convention.



Blustein at (618) 457-6416 or (618) 453-5302.

#### **ORCCON 12, February 10-13**

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention, which is to be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family; strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered at this convention, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90898; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

#### **DUNDRACON XIII, February 17-20**

DUNDRACON is back at the Oakland Airport Hyatt, 455 Hegenberger Road, Oakland, Calif. (Mention the convention name to get the special \$65 room rate for single through quad occupancy.) This year's convention offers numerous role-playing games, with over 120 events in a variety of fantasy, modern, and science-fiction systems. Also included are seminars, board games, miniatures events, a huge dealers' room and a flea market, a figure-painting contest, SCA demonstrations and armor displays, and lots of open gaming space. Preregistration for the weekend is \$20 to February 1, or \$25 at the door. One-day registrations may be purchased at the door for \$10. Write to: DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz Avenue, Oakland CA 96418; or call Dorothy Heydt at: (415) 524-8321.

#### **FAL\*CON '89, February 17-19**

This fantasy and science-fiction convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's Convention Center in Meridian, Miss. Big-name guests and many panels are featured, as well as AD&D®, TALISMAN\*, KINGS & THINGS\*, COSMIC ENCOUNTER\*, CAR WARS\*, KING-MAKER\*, and STAR FLEET BATTLES\* tournaments. An art show, art auction, indoor pool party, masquerade and dance, SEA demonstrations, Civil War reenactment, hospitality suite, and dealers' room are also offered. Admission fees for the weekend are \$15 until December 31, or \$20 thereafter. Daily admission is \$10. Send an SASE to: FAL\*CON '89, P.O. Box 492, Meridian MS 39302; or call: (601) 693-0384.

#### **GENGHIS CON X, February 17-20**

Attend a special birthday party with GENGHIS CON X as it celebrates its 10th anniversary at the Ramada Inn, Westminster, Colo. This event is sponsored by the Denver Gamers-Association. Gaming of all kinds will be offered, along with an official RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament and a games auction. Miniatures events will be staged by the Colorado Military Historians. Registration is \$14 for the weekend until January 31, or \$17 thereafter. Write to: Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 11369, Denver CO 80211; or call: (303) 433-3849.

#### **OMACON 8.5 — GAME FEST, February 18**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central, 72nd and Grover in Omaha, Nebr., from 8 A.M. to midnight. Gaming events will be offered in fantasy, historical, and science-fiction genres (with prizes awarded in several categories), along with a dealers' room and OMACON 9 preregistration discounts. Admission is \$5. Write to: OMACON 8.5 — GAME FEST, c/o Star Realm, 7305 South 85th Street, Omaha NE 68128.

#### **BASHCON '89, March 3-5**

BASHCON '89 is the seventh gaming convention held by the University of Toledo's Benevolent Adventures Strategic Headquarters

(UT-BASH). This event features an auction, a miniatures contest, movies, game exhibitors/dealers, an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament, and more than 130 role-playing, miniatures, and board-gaming events. The convention will be located in the Student Union, third floor, at the University of Toledo's Main Campus. The special guest of honor will be Poul Anderson. Send an SASE to: Student Activities Office, UT-BASH (BASHCON '89), 2801 West Bancroft Street, Toledo OH 43606-3390; or call: (419) 537-4654.

#### **SIMCON XI: The New Beginning March 3-5**

The convention will be held on the University of Rochester's River Campus in the Wilson Commons. Events will include role-playing tournaments, war gaming, miniatures, movies, demos, and a dealers' room for war gaming, role-playing, miniatures, comics, and science-fiction fans. Registration fees are \$5 before February 1, and \$10 thereafter. Write to: SIMCON X, P.O. Box 29142 River Station, Rochester NY 14627; or by calling: (716) 275-6186.

#### **CALCON IV, March 10-12**

This gaming convention will be held at the Sandman Inn in Calgary, Alberta. Events will feature a large variety of games, including an AD&D® tournament, miniatures contests, guest speakers, and more. Send an SASE to: CALCON IV P.O. Box 204, Station M, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T2P 2H6.

#### **COAST CON XII, March 17-19**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Gulf Coast Coliseum Convention Center in Biloxi, Miss., with accommodations at the Howard Johnson's (call (601) 388-6310 or (800) 654-2000 for reservations). Guest of honor is Joel Rosenberg, author of the Guardians of the Flame series. Other guests include: Steven Sechi, designer of *Talislanda* and *Atlantis*; P.D. Breeding-Black, artist for *Talislanda*; and John Levene, who plays Sgt. Benton on *Dr. Who*. Scheduled events include an RPGA™ Network tournament, video rooms, a meet-the-guests party, a costume contest, filk singing, a charity auction, an art exhibit and auction, and a large dealers' room. Registration is \$15 until January 1, and \$20 thereafter. Write to: COAST CON, Inc., P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

#### **NEO-VENTION VIII, March 17-19**

NEO-VENTION VIII will be held at the Gardner Student Center of the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio. Featured events include RPGA™ Network and miniatures events, a games auction, and more. Write to: UGS, University of Akron Gardner Student Center, Office #6, Akron OH 44325. For a quick reply, send a 25-cent stamp or SASE.

#### **OWLCON X, March 17-19**

Rice University's WARP and RSFAFA will hold this gaming convention at Rice University. Registration will take place in Sewall Hall. Events include RUNEQUEST\*, PARANOIA\*, CAR WARS\*, TRAVELLER\*, DIPLOMACY\*, ILLUMINATI\*, CIVILIZATION\*, BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER\*, and AD&D® tournaments, with open gaming and with prizes awarded in some events. Admission fees are \$10 for all three days before March 3, or \$12 at the door. One-day passes \$4 for Friday or Sunday, and \$5 for Saturday. To preregister, send a check for admission made payable to RSFAFA. Write to: OWLCON Preregistration, P.O. Box 1892, Hous-

ton TX 77251.

#### **ABBYTHON 7, March 18-19**

The Abbyville Community Center in Abbyville, Kans., becomes a Guild Hall once again as the Abbython Adventure Guild hosts its seventh-annual 24-hour role-playing games marathon. New members are welcome. Best players will be awarded prizes for their efforts. Admission is \$5 if paid before February 18, \$6 thereafter, and \$7 at the door. Send an SASE to: ABBYTHON, P.O. Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510.

#### **GAMES 89, March 24-27**

This major Australian games convention will offer role-playing, war, computer, and other game events on a massive scale. Nongaming events include: a formal dinner Saturday night (followed by other social events, such as cocktail parties, Easter egg hunts, etc.), show bags, films, lectures, and more. Convention fees are \$16 Australian for the weekend, or \$5 Australian per day. Write to: GAMES 89, P.O. Box 242, Lilydale, Victoria, 3140, AUSTRALIA; or call: (03) 726-7525.

#### **UMF-CON, March 25-26**

This role-playing and war-gaming convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Maine at Farmington, in Farmington, Maine. World War II miniatures, AD&D®, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, BATTLESYSTEM™, DIPLOMACY\*, and CHAMPIONS\* games will be featured, with live mysteries, board games, and contests for miniatures painting and art. Admission is \$5, with a \$2 charge per game. Send an SASE to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South Street, Farmington ME 04928.

#### **I-CON VIII, March 31-April 2**

Held at the State University of New York at Stony Brook; Long Island, I-CON (Island Convention, not Iowa Convention) is the largest science-fiction, fact, and fantasy convention in the Northeast. This year's guests of honor include Frederik Pohl and E. Gary Gygas. Other guests include Joe Haldeman, Barry Longyear, Julius Schwartz, and the current Dr. Who, Sylvester McCoy. Gaming guests include Martin Wixted and Greg Costikyan. More guests are confirmed daily and a *Star Trek* actor-guest is in the works. Featured events include speakers, movies, autograph sessions, and AD&D®, CHAMPIONS\*, STAR WARS\*, and DIPLOMACY\* games. Game masters are welcome. Advance tickets are \$16 until March 17, or \$18 at the door. One-day passes are also available. Send an SASE to: I-CON VIII, P.O. Box 550; Stony Brook NY 11790.

#### **MARCH FANTASY REVEL**

##### **March 31-April 2**

Come to the fourth-annual MARCH FANTASY REVEL at the Harborside Holiday Inn in Kenosha, Wis. Activities will include a war-gaming area, a silent used-game auction, a dealers' area, and role-playing events. Featured RPGA™ Network events include an AD&D® Grand Masters, AD&D® Masters, AD&D® Feature, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ Feature, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Feature tournaments. Other activities include workshops, a gamers' banquet (please make reservations early), and an RPGA™ Network members' meeting. Special guests include Harold Johnson, Jean Rabe, and Skip Williams. Fees are \$8 a day or \$16 for the weekend, if paid before February 1. Thereafter, fees increase to \$10 a day, or \$20 for the weekend. RPGA™ Network members receive a \$2 discount on registration. Write to: Keith Polster, 2432 Park Avenue, Apt. 6, West Bend WI 53095; or

call: (414) 338-8498. Gamers may also contact: Janice Ours, P.O. Box 840, Silver Lake WI 53170; or call her at: (414) 889-8346.

#### **TECHNICON 6, March 31 - April 2**

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Science-Fiction and Fantasy Club (VTSFFC), this sixth-annual science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held in the Donaldson Brown Center on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. Guest of honor is John M. Ford, author of two *Star Trek* books and the *PARANOIA*\* game module *Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues* (winner of the 1984 World Fantasy Award and the Charles Roberts award for best role-playing module). Fan guest of honor is Chip Livingston. Convention activities include three 24-hour video rooms, three tracks of continuous gaming, a dealers' room, panels, the TECHNICON play, computer gaming, a masquerade, science-fiction *Jeopardy*, a dance, parties, and more. Preregistration is \$12 for students and \$15 for others, if paid in advance. Otherwise, fees are \$15 for students and \$18 for others paying at the door. Write to: TECHNICON, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063-0256.

#### **CONNCON, April 1-2**

Held at the Quality Inn in Danbury, Conn., this convention features role-playing, board-gaming, and miniatures events. Two RPGA™ Network tournaments will be held, one open to all players and one for members only. A benefit event will be held; proceeds will go to the American Heart Association. Preregistration is \$10 for the weekend, if paid in advance. Registration paid at the door is \$15. Write to: Hobby Center, 366 Main Street, Danbury CT 06810.

#### **GAME FAIRE '89, April 7-9**

The tenth-annual GAME FAIRE convention will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events will run from Friday night through Sunday afternoon, and include game tournaments, microarmor and historical miniatures, a video room, dealers' tables, role-playing games, board games, family games, a games auction, and a demonstration by the local SCA. Registration for GAME FAIR '89 is \$10 prepaid or \$12 at the door. One-day memberships are available at \$5 for Friday or Sunday, or \$6 for Saturday. All profits go to the Wishing Star Foundation, a charity dedicated to helping children. Write to: Merlyn's, W 201 Riverside, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

#### **ROUNDCON IV, April 7-9**

The Round Table Gaming Society will hold this gaming convention at the Russell House Student Union on the University of South Carolina campus. Events will include multiple-round AD&D® and CHAMPIONS\* tournaments, single-event role-playing games of all types, miniatures events, a video room, a miniatures-painting contest, board games, and rooms for open gaming, with awards and door prizes. Preregistration is \$3 if postmarked before March 15; for confirmation of preregistration, please send an SASE. Write to: ROUNDCON IV, USC Box 80018, Columbia SC 29225; or call: (803) 254-2601 or (803) 772-4784.

#### **SCRYCON '89, April 8**

Able adventurers are needed to regain lost shards of the Famous Crystal Monolith at SCRYCON '89, the seventh-annual one-day tournament sponsored by the seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club. This year's convention will be held at the Red Hook Methodist Church in Red Hook, N.Y. (approximately 60 miles south

of Albany on Route 9). The tournament will consist of AD&D® tournaments, alternate games, miniatures-painting contests, and our popular used-game flea market. Admission is \$5 for the whole day. Send an SASE to: SCYRON '89, P.O. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569.

#### **DEF-CON I, April 15-16**

Sponsored by THE CLUB, this gaming convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's in Portage, Ind. (Intersection of Route 20 and U.S. 249). Special events include PC vs. PC (group vs. group role-playing), RPGA™ Network tournaments, and computer tournaments. Other events include AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CHILL\*, TWILIGHT 2000\*, and BOOT HILL® games. Fees are \$3 preregistered, or \$5 at the door. Games are either free or cost up to \$3. Write to: David Machin, 719 Jumper Road, Valparaiso IN 46383; or call: (219) 759-2530.

#### **AMIGOCON 4, April 21-23**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Melinda Snodgrass is author guest of honor, and Frank Kelly Freas is artist guest of honor. Other guests include Walter Jon Williams, Rick and Pati Cook, Jennifer Robertson, Mel White, and George Alec Effinger. Advance membership is \$10 if paid before December 31. Thereafter, membership fees are \$12. Registrations purchased at the door are \$15 for all three days and \$7.50 for one day. Write to: AMIGOCON 4, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

#### **ONCE UPON A CON, April 28-30**

The International Fantasy Gaming Society will sponsor its first-ever gaming convention in Denver, Colo. Guests of honor will include Larry Niven and David L. Arneson. Events will include IFGS live gaming, seminars, a live tournament maze, board and role-playing games, an art show and auction, a costume contest and ball, and a variety of science-fiction and fantasy programs. The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, I-25 at 120th Avenue in Denver, Colo. Special room rates are available. Write to: ONCE UPON A CON, P.O. Box 16436, Colorado Springs CO 80935; or call Mark Matthews-Simmons at: (303)499-2812.

#### **MISCON 4, May 5-7**

Science fiction, fantasy, and gaming will be the subjects of this convention, to be held at the Holiday Inn, 200 South Pattee Street in Missoula, Mont. Room rates are \$32.50 per night for single occupancy; call (406) 721-8550 to make reservations. Vonda McIntyre is author guest of honor; Dan Reeder is artist guest of honor; Glen (Scruffy) Hammer is fan guest of honor; and Ray Beauvais is gaming guest of honor. Events will include an art show, a masquerade party, original Japanimation, dances, SCA events, gaming, videos, writers' workshops, a computer room, an art gallery, a dealers' room, panels, and an auction. Membership rates are \$12 until December 31; \$16 until April 15; and \$20 at the door. One-day memberships will be available for \$12 at the door. Children under six years of age get in free with their parents; children 6-12 years of age get in for half price. Dealers' tables (6' x 2') may be purchased for \$40 (membership included). Write to: MISCON, Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807; or call: (406) 549-1435.

#### **LITTLE WARS '89, May 26-28**

LITTLE WARS, one of the premier war-gaming conventions, will be held in the Bone

Convention Center on the Illinois State University campus in Normal, Ill. All major miniatures lines will be represented, mostly by the manufacturers. There will be over 100 open games, plus a National Team Ancients Championship sponsored by NASAMW. We are also pleased to host the National Pike and Shot Championship. This convention will be hosted by HMGS-Midwest and its affiliate, the Central Illinois Tabletop Warriors. Admission is \$6 per day or \$8 for the weekend. HMGS members receive a \$2 discount off the admission price. Write to: LITTLE WARS, c/o Todd Fisher, 6010 North Marmora, Chicago IL 60646.

#### **V-CON 17, May 26-28**

V-CON, Vancouver's annual science-fiction convention, will be held at the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, B.C. The theme of this year's convention is "Humor and Satire in Science Fiction." Guests of honor include Spider Robinson, Robert Sheckley, and Bob Shaw. Events will include panel discussions, an art show, videos, gaming, a writer's workshop, a costume bacchanal and dance, a dealers' room, and "guerrilla" theater. Membership for the weekend is \$16 Canadian (\$14 U.S.) until November 30; \$18 Canadian (\$16 U.S.) until March 31; and \$24 Canadian (\$20 U.S.) at the door. One-day memberships will be available at the door at a cost of \$10 for Friday or Sunday, and \$15 for Saturday. Room rates at Totem Residence will be \$26 Canadian for a single and \$40 Canadian for a double. Write to: V-CON 17, P.O. Box 48478, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C., CANADA, V7X 1A2.

#### **MOBI-CON '89, June 9-11**

Mobile's convention for comic books and science-fiction and fantasy gaming will be held at the Days Inn Hotel at Airport Boulevard and Interstate 65 in Mobile, Ala. Guest artists are Dave Dorman and Lurene Haines. Features include a dealers' room, movies, a D&D™ and a TALISMAN\* tournament, a games auction, and other events. Preregistration is \$12.50 until June 1; thereafter, it is \$15. One-day memberships may be purchased at the door for \$6. Write to: MOBI-CON, P.O. Box 161257, Mobile AL 36616; or call: (205)661-4060.

#### **MICHICON GAMEFEST '89, June 16-18**

About 2,000 gamers are expected to attend this three-day gaming convention, to be held in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, Mich. There will be 60 board-game events, 60 miniatures events, and 25 role-playing events. In addition, there will be 35 dealer's booths, three used-games auctions, and a lot of open gaming. Advance admission is \$12 for all three days and \$7 for one day. Food and beverages will be sold at the convention. Preregistration information includes a list of all events, as well as a map of the convention site and several nearby motels and restaurants. The Southfield Civic Center is accessible via I-96, I-75, U.S. 10, and U.S. 29. For more information, send an SASE to: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192. For daytime telephone information, call Barry Jensen at: (313) 591-2300, ext. 325; for evening information, call Mike Bartnikowski at: (313)928-7744; for dealer information, call Joe Tomassi at: (313) 382-1734.



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**mithril**  
MINIATURES

**"NEXT MONTH  
MIRKWOOD"  
(part 1.)**

# SNARFQUEST

#63

BY LENORE

NO SIR, WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY GOLD...

THEN WHY THE BLASTING? WERE THESE TWO JUS TRYIN' T' BLOW THEMSELVES UP?

WHAT?

YES, I GUESS THEY WERE, C'MON AVEEARE, LET'S GET THEM BACK TO CAMP.

UP WE GO.

HUH?

WHAT?

I BET THEY'VE FOUND GOLD UP THERE.

YEP, I THINK SO.

HEY, WE'LL BRING SOME GRUB UP T'YER CAMP THIS EVENIN' AN' SHARE SUPPER WITH YA.

OH...EH... NO...ER, I MEAN, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY!

WHAT?

THANKS ANYWAY.

LATER ...

DO YOU THINK THAT LENARD, SLY, AND SNARF ARE GONNA BE ALRIGHT?

I'M SURE, BUT IT MIGHT BE DAYS BEFORE THEIR HEARING RETURNS.

WHERE ARE ALL THOSE LIL' ROCK ROLLING CRITTERS?

I'VE NOTICED THAT ABOUT THIS TIME EVERY EVENING THEY ALL GO TO THE WOODS TO LOOK FOR FOOD. THEY'LL BE BACK AROUND NIGHTFALL.

HEY, Y'ALL GOT THE BEANS ON THE OL' FIRE YET?

OH@\*3\*! HERE COMES THOSE GUYS.

JUST STAY CALM, I HID ALL OF OUR GOLD.

SNARF, DON'T SAY A WORD ABOUT OUR GOLD.

WHAT?

OUR GOLD, DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

'BOUT WHAT?

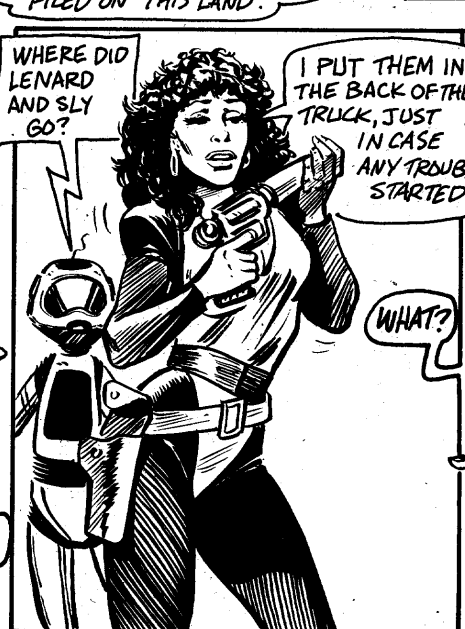
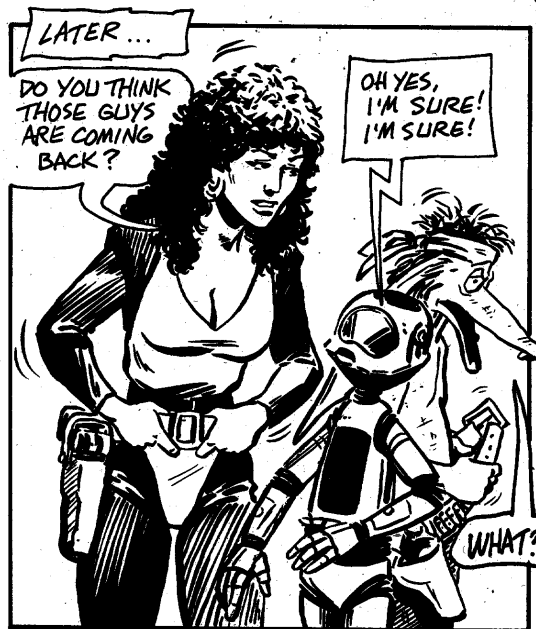
OUR GOLD YOU \*@3\*!

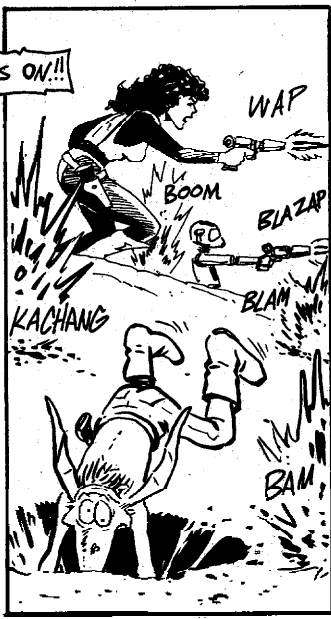
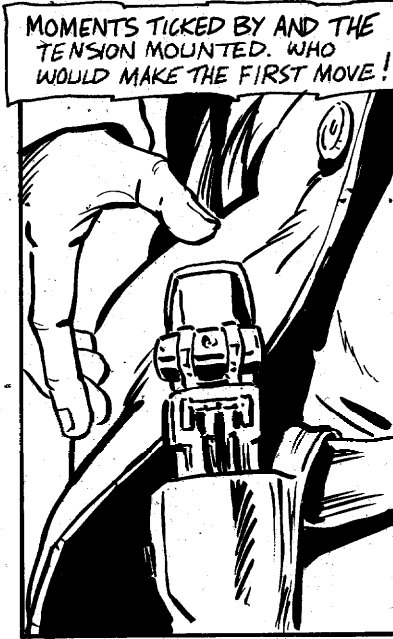
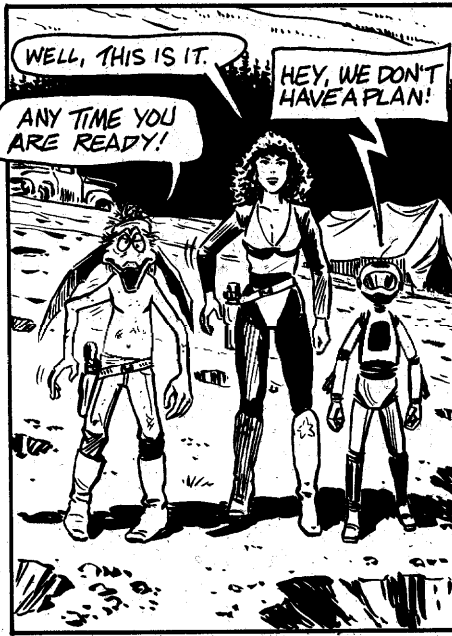
NOW JUST WHAT GOLD WOULD THAT BE, MISSY?

HUH?... OH... GOLD. I SAID I HAVE A VERY BAD COLD!

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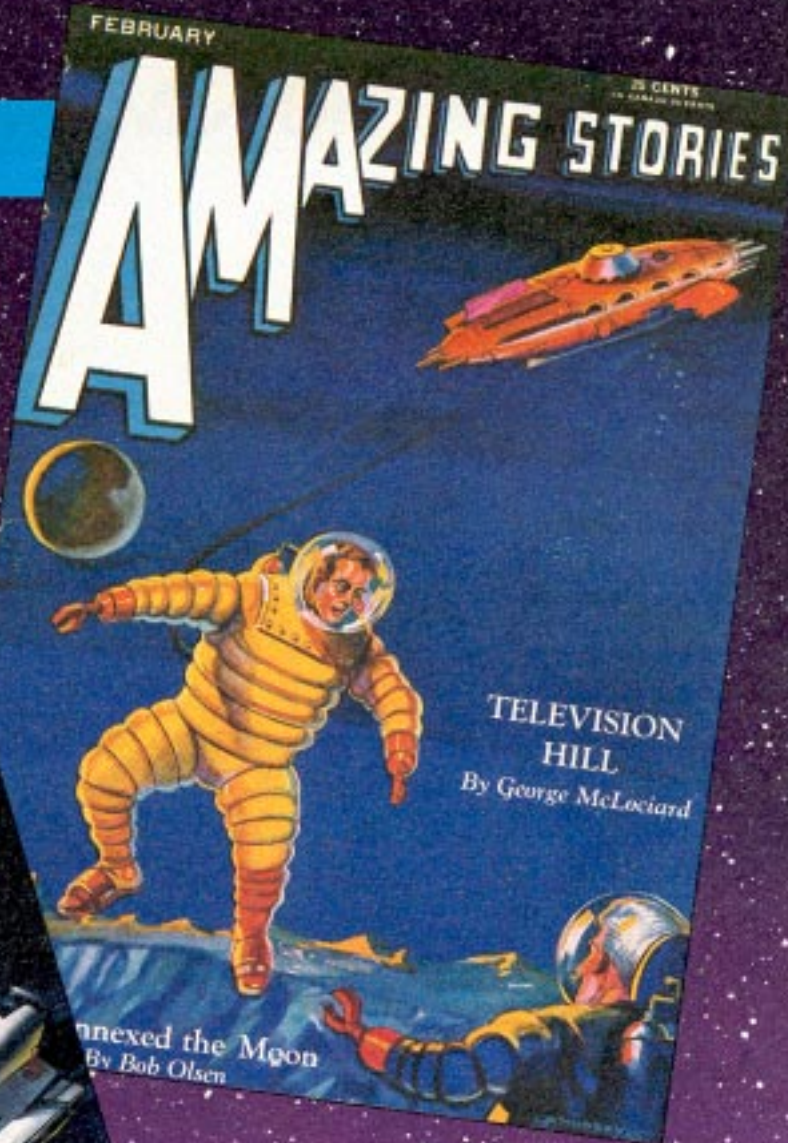






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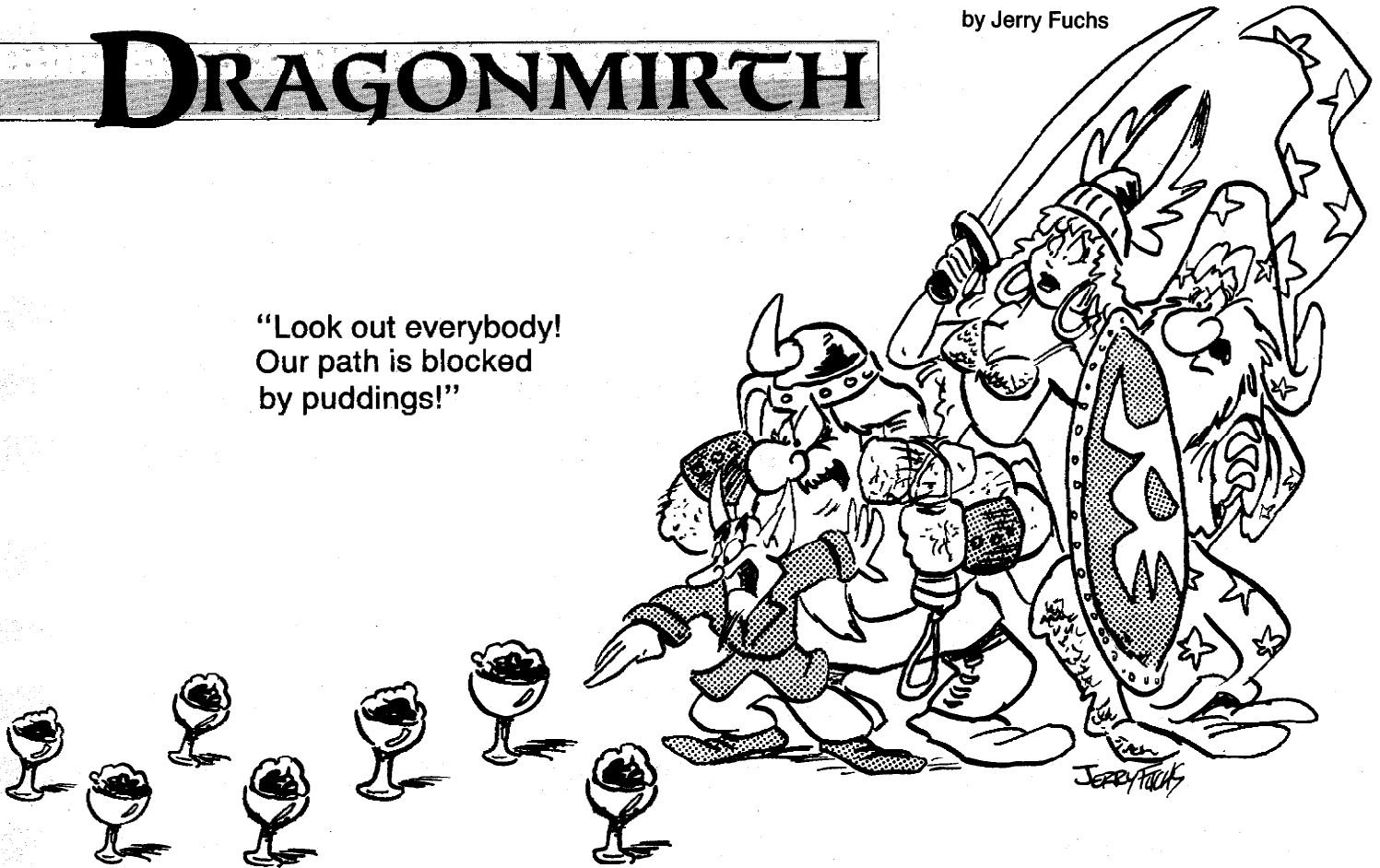
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by Jerry Fuchs

# DRAGONMIRTH

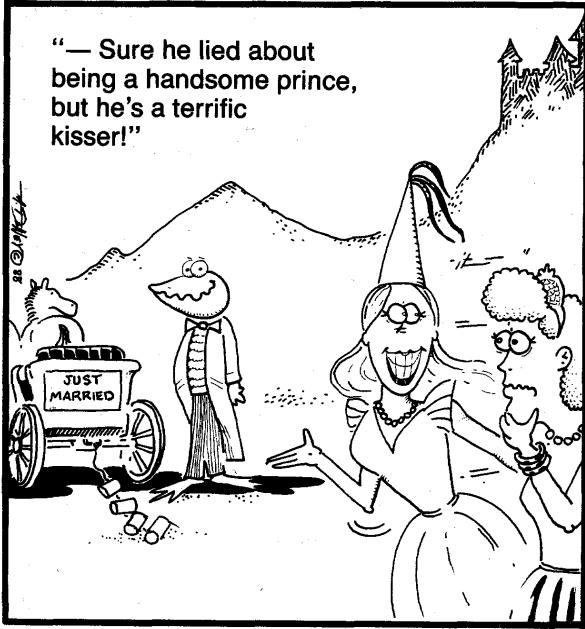
"Look out everybody!  
Our path is blocked  
by puddings!"



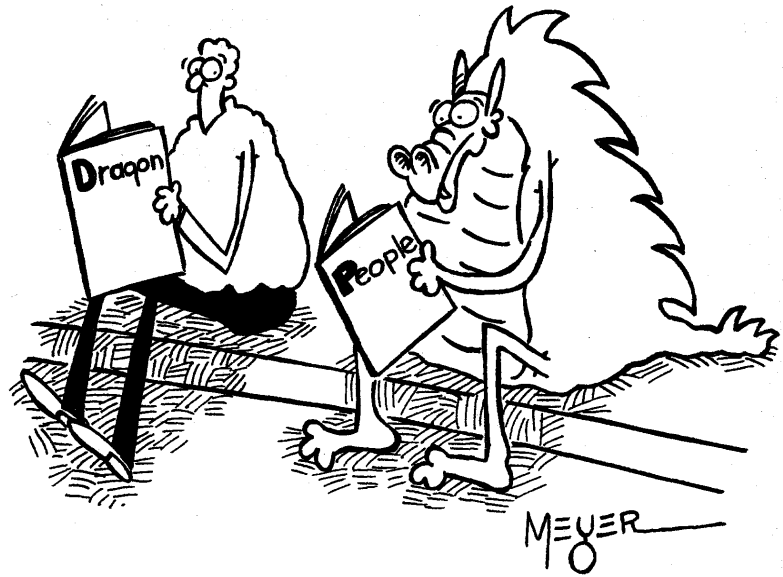
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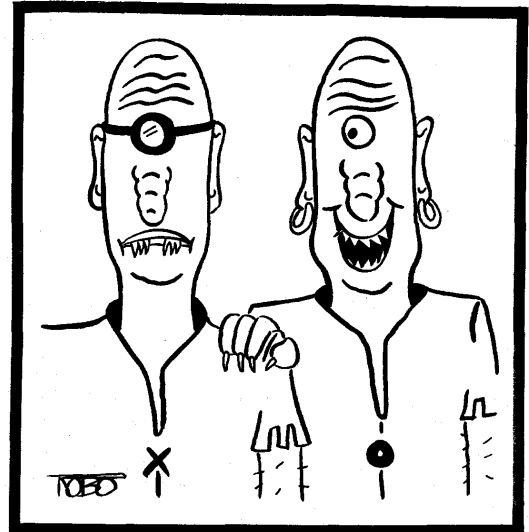


by Richard Tomasic



"Good evening ladies and gentlemen — you know, a funny thing happened to me on the way here tonight. . . ."

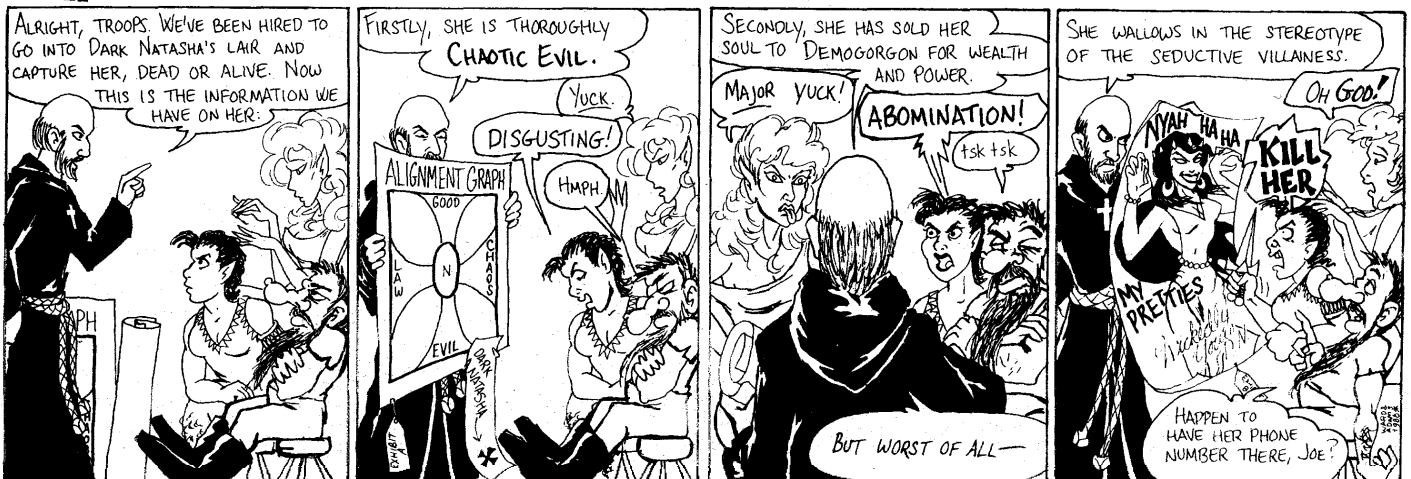
by Larry Robertson



"Hey, two eyes."

YAMARA

by John Adams and Barbera Ward

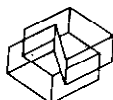


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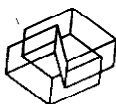
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